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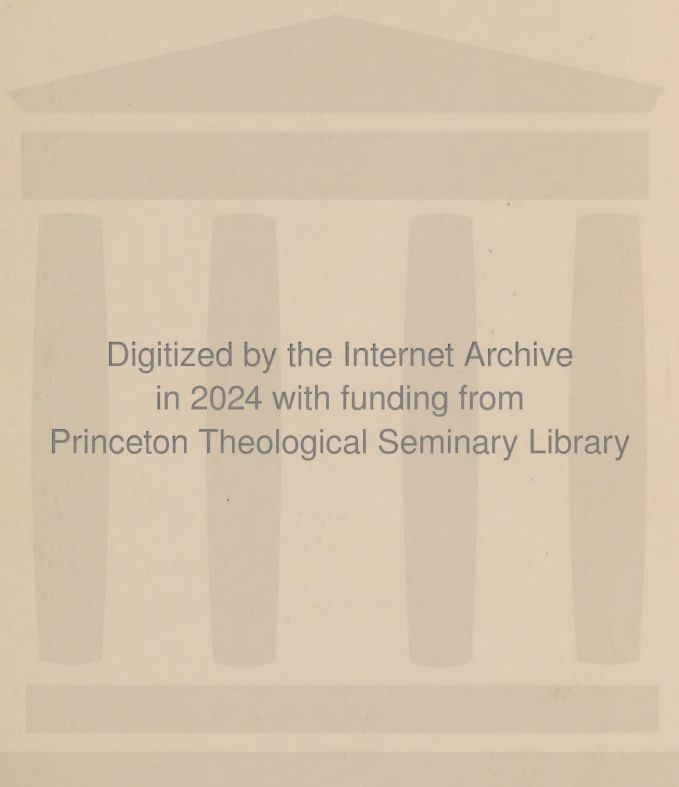
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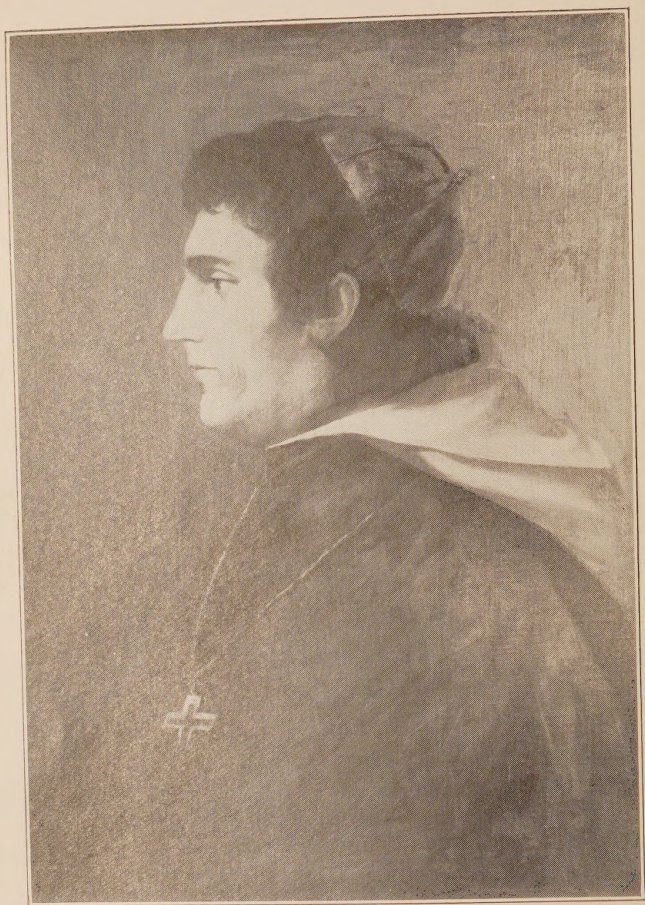
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THE RIGHT REV.  
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O. P.

FOUNDER OF THE DOMINICANS IN THE UNITED STATES

PIONEER MISSIONARY IN KENTUCKY  
APOSTLE OF OHIO  
FIRST BISHOP OF CINCINNATI

BY  
VERY REV. V. F. O'DANIEL, O.P., S.T.M.

THE DOMINICANA  
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TO  
THE MEMORY OF HIS PARENTS  
RICHARD J. AND NANCY HAMILTON O'DANIEL  
TO WHOSE EXAMPLE AND THOUGHTFUL CARE  
UNDER GOD  
HE OWES THE GREATEST BLESSINGS OF HIS LIFE  
THIS BOOK  
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR





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## FOREWORD.

THE general reader, as a rule, has but an imperfect conception of the endless labor and painstaking care involved in a book of the character of the one which we now present to the public. We venture to believe, however, that a few chapters will suffice to show the historian the delving, the toil, the study, the time and the patience demanded in its preparation. The difficulty of the task was augmented by the fact that the work is a pioneer in its field, while investigation proved that the little that had hitherto been written about Bishop Edward D. Fenwick is replete with error. For this reason, no time, no labor nor pains were spared to make this biography of Ohio's apostle accurate and reliable in every detail. Ever and always, the author has sought to base his narrative on bed-rock, drawing the history of the friar prelate from only first-hand sources. The footnotes show but few instances in which he failed to accomplish this. Documents, however, especially if they are litigious or written with a view to gain a point, cannot always be taken at their face-value. For this reason, all documents were carefully studied in order to detect what was alloy of bias and prejudice, and what genuine historic truth. Because he was the founder of the Dominicans in the United States, and twice their superior, Bishop Fenwick's life is intimately and inseparably connected with the early history of that Order in the country, no less than with that of the Church in Kentucky, Ohio and Michigan. The same

searching care has been given to these matters as to the life of the prelate himself.

Another effort that involved no little difficulty was that of making the narrative at once popular and scientific. We have sought to adapt the text of the story to the general public, for whom the book is principally written. The copious footnotes are largely intended to satisfy the demands of the scholar. It must be left to others, however, to judge how far we have succeeded in such an endeavor. But it should be noted that, in order to accommodate the work to the general reader, we have at times taken the liberty of changing the archaic abbreviations, etc., in the old documents to those in modern usage. The purpose of this will be patent to all, and should not, we think, offer cause for unfavorable criticism.

Two chapters of the work, *mutatis mutandis*, have already appeared, substantially, in *The Catholic Historical Review*. Chapter I, "Lineage, Birthplace and Early Boyhood," for instance, was largely published in that magazine (V, 156 ff.) under the caption of "Cuthbert Fenwick—Pioneer Catholic and Legislator of Maryland." Similarly, Chapter VIII, "An Unpleasantness," was printed with few changes by the same publication (VI, 15 ff.) under the title of "Fathers Badin and Nerinckx and the Dominicans in Kentucky, A Long Misunderstood Episode in American Church History." So again, many of the documents and facts found in Chapter XIII, "Appointed a Bishop," were given to the *Review* (V, 428 ff.) in the form of a letter. These various contributions to our leading Catholic historical publication elicited not a little favorable comment.

The narrative was submitted in manuscript form to several scholars of note, from all of whom it received a warm approval. This, together with the charming character of its subject, his deep spirit of religion and self-sacrifice, and his heroic and tireless labors in the cause of the Church, emboldens us to believe that his biography will be accorded a hearty welcome. We venture to hope, furthermore, that it will prove a source of no little interest and edification to our Catholic reading public, as well as a fund of information for the Catholic historian. It was written at the request of the Most Rev. Henry Moeller, archbishop of Cincinnati, whose archdiocese celebrates the centennial of its foundation the coming year.

In a few instances we have been obliged to take sides against those with whom we would much rather have been in accord. This was forced upon us in the interest of what we are convinced is historic truth. Few historians are so fortunate as to escape the painful duty of recording *some* unpleasant things. In these instances we have sought to lay before the reader the plain facts of the case, giving to each side its due merit; and we trust that we have not sinned against charity.

Grateful acknowledgment is due to the late Cardinal Gotti, O.C.D., and other custodians of the Propaganda Archives, Most Rev. Hyacinth Cormier late Master General of the Dominicans, Rev. Paul C. Mercier and Rev. Louis Nolan, O.P., through whose courtesy or assistance many of the documents used for this book were obtained in Rome. Similar acknowledgment is made to His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop Moeller, Bishop O'Donaghue of Louisville, the president and archivist of Notre Dame University, the late Rev. Ed-

ward I. Devitt, S.J., of Georgetown University, Rev. Anthony J. Maas, S.J. (then provincial), and Rev. Joseph Swinge, S.J., archivist of the Maryland-New York Province of Jesuit Fathers, for access to American archives. Among others, besides the three ecclesiastical censors, who have placed us under a debt of gratitude are Professor Leo F. Stock, Ph.D., Rev. P. T. McAllister, O.P., Rev. John H. Lamott, S.T.D., Miss Alice McShane of the library of the Catholic University, and Mr. Frederick V. Murphy, graduate of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris. Lastly, but not least, we must attest our indebtedness to the Very Rev. J. R. Meagher, O.P., provincial, for his sympathy in the work and for the generosity which enables us to offer the life of Bishop Fenwick at a price which, at present, were otherwise impossible. We also take advantage of this occasion heartily to thank all those who have in any wise aided us in the work.

V. F. O'DANIEL, O. P.

THE DOMINICAN COLLEGE,

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA,

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 29, 1920.



# Life of Edward Dominic Fenwick

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## CHAPTER I

### LINEAGE, BIRTHPLACE AND EARLY BOYHOOD

BEFORE the *Ark* and the *Dove*, bearing their cargoes of men and equipment for a settlement in the New World, reached their destination, Lord Baltimore wrote to his friend, Lord Wentworth, that besides his brothers, Leonard and George Calvert, "very near twenty other gentlemen of very good fashion" had accompanied the enterprise.<sup>1</sup> These twenty or so gentlemen were persons of high social standing whose wealth enabled them, in addition to defraying the expenses of their transportation, to contribute towards the establishment of the proposed colony of Maryland. Others, too, it would seem, of some means but of less rank were among the first passengers on the two staunch little vessels.

The greater number of Maryland's earliest settlers, however, were men of small, if any, worldly possessions. Many of them were unable to meet even the cost of the long voyage across the Atlantic. In the hope of finding a home in the unbroken forests of America where they could worship God freely in accordance with the dictates of their conscience, or of bettering their temporal conditions—perhaps of both—this class of colonists voluntarily bound themselves to the more fortunate of the

<sup>1</sup> *Letters and Dispatches of Thomas Wentworth Strafford* (edited by Radcliffe), I, 178-79.

settlers whom they were thus obliged, by contract, to serve for a stipulated period in payment of their transportation to Lord Baltimore's palatinate. In later years such immigrants often pledged their services to merchants or masters of ships; and these not infrequently let or sold the labor thus due them to the wealthier colonists.

Those who came to the province in this humble capacity were known as "redemptioners" or indentured servants. Those who emigrated at their own expense were called freemen. The term of servitude for the former ran, as a rule, from two to five years, according to age, value of service and other circumstances. When the time of their contracts expired, they also became freemen, immediately enjoying equal civic rights and privileges with the independent planters, and were entitled to a certain portion of land for themselves, their wives and their children.

Prior to the "Protestant Revolution" of 1689 at least, a large portion of the colony's population, attracted perhaps no less by the tolerance of the first two lords proprietary than by the prospects offered by their generous government, came to America under such conditions. To come in this status was then considered no disgrace. In fact, many who arrived indentured for their passage money soon rose to prominence after obtaining their freedom, and married into the best colonial families. Some, indeed, of the most honored names in Maryland's history were either redemptioners or the descendants of redemptioners. Among this class, in the early days of the province, were Catholics of equally as high birth and breeding as the some twenty or so "gentlemen of very good fashion" of whom Lord Cecelius

Calvert wrote to his friend. Doubtless the reduced circumstances of these were largely due to the fines and confiscations to which those of their faith were subjected by the odious laws that then existed in the mother country, and that brought many of the wealthiest and noblest of the old English Catholic families to abject poverty.

Such an adventurer was the original American progenitor of the first bishop of Cincinnati, Ohio, the Right Rev. Edward Dominic Fenwick, whose life story is recorded in these pages. Cuthbert Fenwick, of whom we speak, was a scion of one of England's oldest and staunchest Catholic families, as well as one of the most striking and influential builders of Maryland during the first two decades of its history. Davis says of him that he was "the fairest exponent of that system of religious liberty, which had constituted the very corner-stone of the first settlement under the charter" procured by Cecilius Calvert, the lord proprietary.<sup>2</sup> No doubt the training which young Fenwick had received at home prepared him for the part that he was to play in the destiny of the new colony.

Long-standing traditions, when traced to their sources, are generally found to have had their origin in historic truth. So it has proved in the present instance. Tradition had long connected the Fenwicks of Maryland, through their first American forbear, Cuthbert Fenwick, with the Fenwicks of Fenwick Tower, Northumberland County, England. But the actual mention of the name "Cuthberte" in its proper place in the family annals in Great Britain, together with the incessant recurrence of the same Christian names in the colony, seems positively and definitely to establish the identity of the "Lord of

<sup>2</sup> DAVIS, *The Day Star of American Freedom*, p. 207.

Fenwick Manor," Maryland, and to place beyond dispute his connection with the historic family of the same patronymic in the north of England.<sup>3</sup> Thus, though he came to America as a redemptioner, Cuthbert Fenwick could possibly boast of the oldest, if not of the noblest, lineage among the early planters of the Baltimore palatinate.

The Fenwicks of Northumberland, England, can be traced back to the twelfth century. The principal house of the family was that of Fenwick Tower, not far from Newcastle-upon-Tyne. In course of time, however, numerous cadet branches came into existence, spreading the influence of the line widely through the north.<sup>4</sup> Their loyalty to the Catholic faith is said to have been

<sup>3</sup> SAINT-GEORGE, *Pedigrees Recorded at the Herald's Visitations of the County of Northumberland* (edited by Joseph Foster), p. 50; HODGSON, *A History of Northumberland*, II of P. 2, 75.—This seems to be the first time that the Christian name of Cuthbert occurs in the family annals.

<sup>4</sup> SAINT-GEORGE, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-55, and HODGSON, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-76 and 112-114, show that the early Maryland colonist belonged to the cadet houses of Langshaws, or Longshows, and Nunriding.

William B. Goodwin, Ohio, who during many years has made a thorough study, from authentic sources, of the Fenwicks, both in England and America, has given us the following pedigree of the Cuthbert Fenwick who came to Maryland with its first settlers: (1) Robert de Fenwick, about 1190, Ville de Fenwick. (2) Robert de Fenwick, son and heir, about 1230, Ville de Fenwick. (3) Thomas de Fenwick, third son of — Fenwick, possessor of the Manor of Capheaton, afterwards sold to the Swinburns; also later Prior of Hexham Abbey. (4) Sir Thomas de Fenwick, Knight of the Manor of Fenwick. (5) Alan de Fenwick, of Fenwick, third son. (6) Sir John de Fenwick, Knight of Fenwick. (7) Sir John de Fenwick, second son, knighted in the French War by King Henry V and given the motto "*Perit ut vivat*," and Manor of Trouble Ville, in Normandy. In this generation Fenwick Tower descended to Sir John's elder brother, Sir Alan de Fenwick. (8) John Fenwick, to whom his father gave Newburne Hall. (9) Sir Roger Fenwick, fourth son, Constable of Newcastle and Esquire of the Body to King Henry VII. (10) Sir Ralph Fenwick, Knight, who married the sole heiress of Mitford of Stanton. (11) Anthony Fenwick, second son, who received the house of Langshaws from his mother. (12) Stephen Fenwick of Langshaws, son and heir. (13) George Fenwick of Langshaws, living in 1615. (14) Cuthbert Fenwick, fourth son, whose eldest brother, William, son and heir to George mentioned above, was twelve years of age in 1615.



long of the most steadfast. The records of Britain's dark penal days, imperfect and incomplete as they are, bear mute but eloquent testimony to the fidelity of many of them to their religion, as well as of the fines imposed on them for having the courage to be recusants in the face of laws most intolerant. It is not improbable, indeed, that the family of Cuthbert had been thus reduced to straits that obliged him to come to America as a redemptioner.

But if he were a passenger on the *Ark* or the *Dove*, which is more than likely, another explanation might be advanced for his emigrating in so humble a capacity. The young man's conscience might have forbidden him to take the prescribed test oath; and to avoid a thing so odious to Catholics he elected to enlist in Lord Baltimore's enterprise among the adventurers indentured to others, whose oaths seemed to have sufficed for those bound to their service. Yet he appears to have arrived in the colony a poor man.

In any case, the noble youth had not less to expect in the New World than in the Old. At home, one of his faith could look for little or nothing except trouble and persecution. In the broad domains of America, and under the kindly and tolerant rule of a man like Cecelius Calvert, he might hope to plant his name and posterity forever. It may be, too, that he had in him some of the spirit of adventure which was then rife among those of his class and age in Great Britain. Thus more than one influence, perchance, had its part in bringing to Maryland one of the most charming personages of its early history.

The young cavalier's father was George Fenwick of Longshows, or Langshaws, a cadet branch of the main

line of Fenwick Tower. In the family there were nine children, six boys and three girls. Cuthbert, as is shown by Saint-George's pedigrees of Northumberland, was the fourth son, and was living in 1615. The precise date of his birth is not known; but his own testimony, given in April, 1654, that he was then forty years of age, "or thereabouts,"<sup>5</sup> proves that he was born probably in 1613 or 1614, making him twenty or twenty-one years old when he landed on the shores of the New World.

Both the time of his arrival in Maryland and the question as to whether he was a passenger on the *Ark* or the *Dove* have been subjects of discussion. The difficulty arises from a petition of Thomas Cornwallis, made in 1652, for grants of land in virtue of having "transported" twenty-two servants into the colony from 1634 to that date. Amongst these servants he mentions Cuthbert Fenwick as one of four whom he "brought and exported" from Virginia in 1634. But against this record we have two others, both belonging to 1639, and in both of which Fenwick is mentioned just as explicitly as one of ten men servants whom the wealthy landholder brought "into the province in 1633."<sup>6</sup> These two entries, dating as they do to a period much nearer Fenwick's arrival in the settlement, ought to outweigh the

<sup>5</sup> *Archives of Maryland* (Vol. X), *Judiciary and Testamentary Business of the Provincial Court, 1649/50-1657*, p. 372.

<sup>6</sup> Land Records, Annapolis, Maryland, Liber I, p. 110, and Liber A. B. H., pp. 94 and 143-44. See also RICHARDSON, *Sidelights on Maryland History*, I, 12, 14, 15, 417.—Mrs. Richardson, it seems to us, by no means substantiates her claim that Cuthbert Fenwick was not a passenger on the *Ark* or the *Dove*. And it should be noted here that the words "transported" and "imported," so often found in the early Maryland records, had not then the ugly meaning with which they have since come to be invested. They simply meant the payment of the colonists' fare to the New World. Not unfrequently do we find a man claiming land for the "transportation" of his wife or child, or even of himself. After all, it may very well be that Fenwick was merely in the employment of Cornwallis; and that the worthy commissioner and councilor brought the clever young man over to look after his business as his attorney.

single statement of later years, when lapse of time, pressure of business and the increased number of imported persons all conspired to make the memory less clear and trustworthy. The argument is all the stronger in view of the careless manner in which records of that day were written, and of the almost verbal agreement of the two earlier entries of Cornwallis' claims.

Again, the fact that Cuthbert Fenwick's name appears as one of the witnesses to the will of George Calvert, a brother of the lord proprietary, July 10, 1634,<sup>7</sup> shows that he must have been among the early settlers long enough to win the confidence of those in charge of the province. But this would hardly have been possible, had he not come to America in the *Ark* or the *Dove*. Tradition, also, of long standing, insists on placing the distinguished pioneer legislator among the original group of adventurers who landed on Saint Clement's Island and assisted at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, March 25, 1634, the first day of the new year according to the old Julian calendar.

The little documentary discrepancy may be explained on the supposition that Fenwick remained in Virginia, where we know the pilgrims tarried for more than a week on their journey, to transact business for his master, Cornwallis, and then continued his way to Maryland. But be this as it may, the young scion of the noble house of Fenwick Tower did not long remain subject to Cornwallis. The treatment that he received from this high-minded gentleman was most kindly and generous. Indeed, because of the esteem in which he was held by his patron, and the exceptional advantages he derived from intimate association with such a man, it was perhaps fortunate for the young cavalier that he fell, at that period

<sup>7</sup> *Maryland Historical Magazine*, I, 363-64.

of his life and in a new, uncivilized country, under the wholesome influence of a person of Cornwallis' character. Cornwallis was a leader among the colonists and one of the two commissioners appointed by Lord Baltimore to assist Governor Calvert in the affairs of the province. From the start, he seems not merely to have placed implicit confidence in Fenwick's honesty, but to have entrusted matters of much moment to his prudence, judgment and ability. A perusal of the records that still remain, tempts us to believe that the commissioner regarded Cuthbert Fenwick as a friend, an associate and an adviser rather than as one in his employment.

They were both possessed of rare parts, splendid characters, tireless energy, and unimpeachable integrity. Both were just such men as were needed to build up a commonwealth in the primeval forests of the New World. Kindred spirits, they appear to have been inseparable, and to have acted together—at least from the time Fenwick obtained his freedom—in all important concerns of the province during most of the first two decades of its existence. Indeed, almost from the beginning we see Fenwick, though a young man in his twenties, acting as the commissioner's attorney to look after his business and vast estates, not merely during his visits to England and absence on matters of personal or colonial interests, but when he was at home. For this reason, although married, having a family and possessing broad acres in his own right, Fenwick long lived—perhaps until 1651—at Cornwallis' manor, known as "The Cross."<sup>8</sup>

In March, 1638, Fenwick sat in the colonial assembly of freemen called to consult the welfare of the budding

<sup>8</sup> It is remarkable how often the names of Fenwick and Cornwallis are linked together in the records of that day.



state. It was the second meeting of its kind in the province, but the first of which we have any satisfactory account. For Cuthbert Fenwick it marked the beginning of a notable career in what was to become the lower house of the general assembly. Taking an active part in the deliberations of this body, whose proceedings are among the most noteworthy in Maryland colonial records, he becomes at once a man of mark, as well as a conspicuous historic personage. His rise was rapid, and thenceforth, to the time of his death, he figured prominently in the legislative meetings of provincial Maryland. On one occasion, during the absence of Cornwallis, whose attorney he was, he sat by special summons of Leonard Calvert in the governor's council to take the place of the commissioner.<sup>9</sup> It would seem, indeed, that he was the only man to receive such an order in the history of the province.

A man of sterling worth and inflexible honesty, possessed of a charming character which he appears to have handed down to his posterity, Cuthbert Fenwick won the confidence and the good-will of his fellow-colonists, both bond and free. As may be seen from the record of his voting at the assemblies of which he was a member, gentle and considerate though he was, he had a will that refused to be swerved from what he felt to be his duty. On various occasions he is found taking sides against the governor and his council and secretary. Once he cast his vote against a measure that was favored by all his associates.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Archives of Maryland* (Vol. I), *Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly*, 1637/38-1664, pp. 88-89.

<sup>10</sup> *Archives of Maryland* (Vol. I), *Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly*, 1637/38-1664; (Vol. 3), *Proceedings of the Council*, 1636-1667; (Vol. IV), *Judicial and Testamentary Business of the Provincial Court*, 1637-1650; and (Vol. X), *Judicial and Testamentary Business of the Provincial Court*, 1649/50-1657; all *passim*.



Few, if any, of the original colonists were more frequently members of the legislative body than Cuthbert Fenwick. His political life, however, may be said to have reached its climax in the assemblies of 1649 and 1650. In the former, which is specially noted for passing the historic act of religious toleration, he was the first member of the financial committee. Davis is of the opinion that he was probably also the speaker of the lower house on this occasion.<sup>11</sup> We may imagine the interest that one of his staunch Catholic faith took in the "Act Concerning Religion" at a time when everything boded so ill for his Church and its adherents. In the Protestant assembly of 1650 he was chairman of a joint committee on "Laws and Orders" composed of members of both houses.

The assembly of 1650 was controlled by the Puritans who, apparently in a spirit of religious bias, imposed an oath of secrecy upon its members. For refusing to take the oath Thomas Matthews, the Catholic burgess elected by Saint Inigoes Hundred, Saint Mary's County, was expelled from the lower house. Cuthbert Fenwick was then elected by the same voters to succeed the ejected member. But Fenwick also scented danger in the measure, for he had been a victim of religious intolerance both in England and in Maryland. He saw only too clearly that an assembly sworn to secrecy would be a dangerous weapon in the hands of men whom he had every reason to fear might be disposed to use it against those of his faith. Like Matthews, he refused to take

<sup>11</sup> DAVIS, *op. cit.*, p. 212.—Some writers question Davis' supposition that the assembly sat in two houses in 1649. But Bacon (*Laws of Maryland at Large*—study on the assembly of 1649), Bancroft (*History of the United States of America*, I, 349), and other authors of note are of the same opinion as Mr. Davis.

the oath, unless assured that it contained nothing opposed to his religion or his conscience. Though he was told that he would be expelled from his seat if he did not take the oath of secrecy without limitation or reserve, by tactful prudence and firmness he managed not merely to retain his place, but to elicit from the legislative body a declaration that they had never intended to bind any member in a way that would infringe upon his religion or trespass upon his conscience.<sup>12</sup> In view of the strong Puritan prejudices of the day, this was not only a notable triumph for the clever legislator; it was a victory of importance. As is shown by Maryland's subsequent history, Fenwick understood the trend of the day and set himself to counteract its consequences.

From the time he obtained his freedom, he is styled: "Cuthbert Fenwick, Gentleman." Governor Calvert, representing Lord Baltimore, calls him, in official documents: "Our trusty Cuthbert, Gentleman"; or "Our beloved Cuthbert Fenwick, Gentleman." Indeed, the title "gentleman," which in those days had a special significance as implying nobility of birth, is rarely ever omitted from his name in the records of the times.

Few men of his day were the recipients of so many signs of good-will from his fellow-colonists, or of so many commissions of trust and importance, as Fenwick. Few were so frequently employed in the service of the province. Time and again was he appointed to positions that demanded good judgment and no little courage. Though favor and regard were shown him by the governor, this did not prevent him from being a champion of the rights of the people. More than once we see him a member of a committee, of which he was the chairman,

<sup>12</sup> *Archives of Maryland*, Vol. I, as above, 237 ff., and 273 ff.

appointed to draw up a list of the grievances of the free-men of the colony, or to draft the laws which they wished to have enacted. Of the innumerable juries on which he served, he was almost uniformly the foreman. Again and again does his name appear as the executor or administrator of estates; as the appraiser of property; as a delegate to take or to pass judgment on an inventory; as an arbitrator of difficulties, either chosen by the court or selected by the parties concerned; as the attorney of people in every station of life to prosecute or to defend their cause before the assembly.

Although the historians of Maryland have done little more for this interesting and deserving personage than to preserve his memory, the colonial records for nearly a score of years are literally burdened with the repetition of Cuthbert Fenwick's name. With the exception of Thomas Cornwallis, perhaps no other man of the time was more actively engaged, or took a more prominent part in the affairs of the little colony along the Chesapeake Bay. None manifested a keener interest in its welfare. The chronicles show him to have been a leader in all that made for good. His was a record of which Maryland and his numerous descendants may be justly proud.<sup>13</sup>

It was but natural that a man of such splendid capacity and tireless activity should rapidly accumulate a competent fortune, even in a country so new and uncultivated as Maryland then was. Only a few years, in fact, had passed before we find Cuthbert Fenwick one of the largest taxpayers in the colony, indicating that he was one of the largest property holders. His rise was

<sup>13</sup> See note 10.

the result, not of fortune or accident, but of character, industry and ability.

It is furthermore worthy of note that in 1645, because of his faithful discharge of his duty as attorney for his friend, Cornwallis, during the insurrection of Richard Ingle and William Claiborne, the evil geniuses of the province, the Catholic legislator was made prisoner by the rebels. Not only was he held a prisoner in their ship; he was subjected to many hardships and indignities.<sup>14</sup> Under these trying circumstances he seems to have shown the same strength of purpose and singleness of mind that stand out as a prominent trait of his whole life. And in this he was a prototype of his saintly descendant of the same patronymic, the first bishop of Cincinnati. But of this we shall speak on a later page.

Of Cuthbert Fenwick's educational opportunities nothing is definitely known. Yet, while we nowhere find it stated that he was a barrister or legal practitioner, the frequency with which he acted as attorney for the colonists, not only to transact their business, but to prosecute or to defend their cause before the court, and the acquaintance which he seems to have had with the nice points and technicalities of law, would indicate that he was a man of culture and possessed of no mean knowledge of jurisprudence, if not a lawyer. For a time he was one of a committee of three appointed "to hear and determine" all causes in the province, whether civil or criminal, "not extending to life or member."<sup>15</sup> In his capacity as attorney for Cornwallis he showed his fearless spirit by bringing suit (1644-1645) against Governor Calvert for 100,000 pounds of tobacco, then the

<sup>14</sup> DAVIS, *op. cit.*, p. 210; *Archives of Maryland*, Vol. X, as above, 253-54 and 371-73.

<sup>15</sup> *Archives of Maryland*, Vol. III, as above, 150-151.



legal tender of the country. The case is one of the most interesting in the early annals of the province, and shows that Fenwick possessed considerable skill in the management of such proceedings.<sup>16</sup>

But the sturdy pioneer was not merely a leader in civic matters. Staunch and practical in his faith, he was likewise prominent and active in the affairs of his Church. Withal he was humble and unpretentious. From the outset, he was a steadfast and special friend and adviser of the Jesuit Fathers, Maryland's earliest missionaries, and was their trusted agent in the management of temporalities. Nor did he hesitate to defend them in misunderstandings with even such strong men as John Lewger, secretary of the province, Governor Calvert and the lord proprietary.<sup>17</sup> Doubtless, it was in this way that were laid the foundations of a lasting and extraordinary friendship towards that distinguished body of ecclesiastics, which may be noticed to this day among Cuthbert Fenwick's descendants in Maryland. Beginning with one of Cuthbert's own sons, it is remarkable how many of them, as a result no doubt of this devotion, have borne the baptismal name of Ignatius, after the sainted founder of that institute, since the days of their forefather who helped to lay the cornerstone of Maryland, the "Land of Sanctuary."

As has been stated, Cuthbert Fenwick seems to have lived at The Cross, the manorial home of Captain Cornwallis, until 1651. But in this year he received from Lord Baltimore a grant of 2,000 acres of land lying on the Patuxent River and adjoining the historic De La

<sup>16</sup> *Archives of Maryland*, Vol. IV, as above, 292-94.

<sup>17</sup> HUGHES, *The History of the Society of Jesus in North America: Documents*, I, P. 1, *passim*; Text, I, 484-85 and 567-68, and II, 23, 25, 38.



Brooke Manor, which belonged to Robert Brooke.<sup>18</sup> To this new estate, whither he appears to have moved at once, Fenwick gave the name of St. Cuthbert's, in honor of his patron saint. Even in his lifetime, however, it was commonly called Fenwick Manor, and was so known for more than a century. Thereafter he devoted his talents largely to the cultivation of his property and to beautifying his home, in which he perhaps hoped that his name might be perpetuated in the New World. Unfortunately, his days were cut short, when in the prime of life. He was but one or two and forty years of age at the time. As may be seen from his will and that of his wife, he did not live to erect the mansion he proposed to place on Saint Cuthbert's Manor, but died in a house constructed on another part of his plantation lying on a branch of Saint Cuthbert's Creek. The precise time of his death is not known. His will, however, signed March 6, 1655 (Old Style, 1654), and the appointment of Mrs. Fenwick as administratrix of his estate by the court, April 24, 1655, show that he died between these two dates.<sup>19</sup> The assembly of October and court of December, 1654, by indicating his presence at their transactions, prove that he remained active to the end. One regrets the loss to the young Catholic colony in being thus deprived of so capable a man in the heyday of his vigorous mentality and at the height of his usefulness.

Cuthbert Fenwick was twice married. Of his first wife, the date of the marriage, or that of her death no

<sup>18</sup> Land Records, Annapolis, Maryland, Liber A. B. H., p. 158; RICHARDSON, *op. cit.*, I, 291; THOMAS, *Chronicles of Colonial Maryland* (ed. of 1913), pp. 360-61. Fenwick's land was surveyed, April 24, 1651.

<sup>19</sup> Cuthbert Fenwick's will is in Liber S of the Provincial Court Records, Annapolis, pp. 219-20.

record has been discovered. But his relations with Cornwallis cause one to fancy that she was at least a relative, if not a daughter, of the early commissioner. She left her husband four children, Thomas (doubtless named after Cornwallis), Cuthbert, Ignatius and Teresa. In 1649, he was again joined in holy wedlock—this time with Mrs. Jane Eltonhead Moryson, widow of Robert Moryson of Kecoughtan (now Hampton), Virginia.<sup>20</sup> The second Mrs. Fenwick was a daughter of Richard Eltonhead of Eltonhead, Lancashire, England, and belonged to a family probably not less distinguished than that of Fenwick himself. Her brother, the Hon. William Eltonhead, a member of the Maryland colonial council, was put to death by the Puritans in 1655. The fruit of this marriage was three sons, Robert, Richard and John. Fenwick was survived by all his children, except Thomas, whose early death is shown by the absence of his name from the wills of both his father and his step-mother.

The early Catholic legislator, one cannot but believe, was a devoted husband and a fond father. At the time of his death he possessed some thousands of acres of land, lying along the beautiful Patuxent River and extending, Thomas tells us, from the present Cat Creek to Saint Cuthbert's (now Cuckold) Creek.<sup>21</sup> To his wife he bequeathed "the land west of Deep Branch at St. Cuthbert's Neck absolutely," and "plantation during life." The residue of his real estate he willed to be equally divided among his sons, Cuthbert, Ignatius, Robert, Richard and John; except that the eldest who bore his own Christian name, and who was "to be the Lord of the

<sup>20</sup> Fenwick's marriage contract with the widow Moryson is in Liber S of the Provincial Court Records, Annapolis, pp. 218-19, and is dated August 1, 1649.

<sup>21</sup> THOMAS, *op. cit.*, p. 360.

Manor" and to have Saint Cuthbert's proper for his plantation, was to receive an extra hundred acres. Teresa's portion, as was often the case with daughters in times past, consisted of personalty. Following the tenor of his life, he remembered the Church in the persons of Fathers Starkey and Fitzherbert.

As the children were still minors, Mrs. Fenwick was appointed their guardian. Being a woman of business ability, affairs continued to prosper under her administration. But unfortunately she did not long survive her husband, a circumstance that seems to have caused the youthful family, thus left without the guidance of her good judgment, considerable inconvenience. This, however, they were able to overcome as they grew in age and experience.

Jane Eltonhead Fenwick's will is dated November 24, 1660, and was probated on the twelfth day of the following month. It shows that she divided the land left to her by her husband into three parts, called the "home plantation," "Little Fenwick" and "Mousieur's Plantation." These she ordered to be equally distributed among her own three sons, Robert, Richard and John. To her stepchildren, Cuthbert, Ignatius and Teresa, she gave servants, stock and other personalty. Like her husband, Mrs. Fenwick did not forget her Church in her last will and testament. The document is evidence of the bond of unity and harmony and affection and mutual confidence that existed in the family; for she appointed her stepsons, Cuthbert and Ignatius, on attaining the legal age of one and twenty years, guardians of her own children during their minority.<sup>22</sup> It is worthy of note

<sup>22</sup> Mrs. Fenwick's will is in Will Book No. I, pp. 114 ff., Land Office, Annapolis, Maryland.

that no little value and interest attach to her will as giving a fair idea of the home comforts, the wardrobe of colonial dames, and the household furnishings among the wealthier of Maryland's settlers. It throws much light upon an important branch of history, the social and domestic life of the past.

There may be those who will think that we have given too lengthy a sketch of the noble Catholic pioneer in the life of one of his remote descendants, Bishop Edward D. Fenwick of Cincinnati. But it must be borne in mind that such things as we have written, apart from being of keen interest to many readers, contain a lesson to inculcate which should be the prime purpose of every history or biography. They show that the good that is in parents passes down from generation to generation. Again, the story of Maryland—the most elite of the Anglo-American colonies—until religious bias and intolerance began to mar its beauty, is the most glorious of our colonial days. And Cuthbert Fenwick, as has been said, was a leader in the making of that history. He was a man of the same caliber and spirit as the first two Lords Baltimore, Leonard Calvert, Thomas Cornwallis and other champions of religious toleration. A steadfast and practical Catholic, he stood boldly for his faith and in defense of liberty of conscience. His spirit of honesty and fraternal charity, as his kindly, even disposition and judicial temperament, not only caused him to be trusted and respected by all, but made for the peace, harmony and prosperity of the palatinate.

The character which we have described the pioneer legislator seems to have transmitted to his posterity. We find it exemplified in the life of the first bishop of Cincinnati, and in other descendants of Cuthbert Fen-



wick to this day. Hence they have ever been not merely among the foremost Catholics, but important *personae* in the drama of colonial Maryland and in the later history of the state. Like their original American progenitor, they have been almost uniformly true to their religion. And as they intermarried with the leading families of their own faith, the blood of Cuthbert Fenwick runs in the veins of the best Catholic circles of what was once Lord Baltimore's palatinate. Some of his descendants, it is true, have occasionally joined lives with those not of the Church. But ordinarily their fidelity was such that, if they did not make converts of those with whom they were united in wedlock, their children were brought up to be steadfast in their adherence to the Church of Rome.

Although few patronymics are more common in Maryland, rarely if ever does one meet with a Fenwick who does not profess fidelity to Christ's Vicar on earth. As a noted author expresses it: "Through evil, and through good, after the lapse of many years, in the midst of vast social and political revolutions, they have clung, with the fondness of children, to the faith of their first forefather."<sup>28</sup> Nor is this true only of those who remained in the place of their origin. It is perhaps equally true of those descended from the same line in Kentucky, Missouri and portions of the south.

Like their first American forbear again, everywhere have they been conspicuous for their civic virtues. Everywhere, whether in wealth or in poverty, they have stood high in the circles in which they lived. It may be said without fear of contradiction that few other Maryland families have so faithfully maintained the best tra-

<sup>28</sup> DAVIS, *op. cit.*, p. 208.



ditions of their colonial sires. From the beginning of the stormy days that led to the American Revolution to the present time, many have been the responsible positions, civil, military and professional, filled with credit by descendants of Cuthbert Fenwick. So also have they been among our most highly honored and deeply revered Catholic clergy and hierarchy. No doubt the Fenwick blood and character, together with the careful religious training so uniformly given to their children by parents of this stock, had their part in the formation and development of these vocations.

Thus, it seems to us, no apology is needed for this lengthy sketch of Maryland's early legislator. The biography that passes lightly over the things that were a shaping and molding power in the life of its subject, must lack interest, impart little instruction, and fail to accomplish the good which it should be the object of every writer to effect. There can be no doubt that the facts we have laid before the reader, exercised a strongly formative influence upon the saintly friar whose life we are to trace in these pages. In none of the Anglo-American colonies was the spirit of the later inhabitants more profoundly affected than was that of the Catholics in Maryland by the memories handed down from the earliest settlers. To this day, owing probably to the fact that the state is still largely agricultural, such memories continue to be a part of Maryland Catholic life, and to exert a molding force upon those of the old faith. This power for good was strong in the boyhood of Edward Fenwick.

The future bishop's piety, meekness and humility rather quickened than chilled his patriotism. His earliest extant letters show his deep love for his native land

—especially for the state of his birth. Tradition tells us that he gloried in the spirit of liberty which animated the colonists at the time of the revolution, and in the fearlessness with which they maintained their rights against the tyranny of the mother country. He could not but have felt an honest pride in the part taken by his relations, and notably that by his father, in the efforts of Maryland to throw off the yoke of England and to establish a free and independent American commonwealth.

Nor was this all. Maryland, it has been handed down to us, was a subject on which the bishop was wont frequently to speak. He knew the history of the colony, and was filled with its traditions. As a missionary in the near west he delighted to tell of its Catholic origin—how its founder's tolerant spirit made it a home and a refuge for the poor and oppressed of all nations. He gloried in the steadfast loyalty of its Catholics to the Church during the dark days of trial, persecution and suffering. Well he might; for there is indeed much in the annals of colonial Maryland of which those of Cecelius and Charles Calvert's faith may be justly proud. But the apostle of Ohio, humble and unpretentious as he was, had a special reason for exultation in this part of his native colony's history. Not only had his first American progenitor been one of its earliest settlers and most influential members; his nearer forefathers had continued to be among its leading men, staunchly true to their religion, and faithful to its practices. Through these some of the best blood, not of Maryland only, but of America, coursed in his veins. In this, however, the lowly ambassador of Christ seems to have found no cause for glory.

Such things, indeed, could not fail to make a strong impression upon a youth of Edward Fenwick's pious

and sympathetic disposition. The persecutions had not ceased at the time of his birth. There are reasons, in fact, for believing that the influence thus exercised upon his boyish mind had not a little to do with turning his thoughts, when a student abroad, towards the priesthood and the religious life, that he might further the cause of the Catholic religion in his native land.

Robert, Cuthbert Fenwick's eldest son by his second marriage, is said to have died young. And as from 1663, when he had not yet attained his majority, we find no further mention in the colonial registers of Ignatius, born of the first marriage, it would seem that he also died early and without issue. Of Teresa, the only daughter, there is no trace after the death of her stepmother. John, the youngest of the family, appears to have left no descendants. Cuthbert and Richard are soon seen rising in the esteem of the colony, and receiving appointments as justices of the peace, an important position in the early days. The former, however, drops from the records from 1676, which is supposed to have been the year of his death. He is said to have left one child, a daughter, who married but had no issue.

Thus, it would appear, all the Fenwicks of the Catholic line of Maryland came from Richard, the early legislator's second son by Jane Eltonhead. Yet it was a prolific race and increased rapidly. But anti-Catholic prejudice had now gained the upper hand in the colony. All enjoyed toleration, except those of the faith of the first two lords proprietary who had established the palatinate as a home for religious liberty. Catholics, sad to say, could no longer hope for preference or to hold positions of profit, honor or trust. This was forbidden by law. From 1689, the year of the "Protestant Revo-

lution," therefore, until the struggle for independence, we find no record of the Fenwicks taking part in affairs of state. They continued, however, generally to prosper, even under the drastic restrictions placed upon the adherents of their religion, to stand high in the community, and to exert a wholesome influence for the good of the province.

It took the American Revolution (1774-1783) to tear down the barriers of intolerance against Catholics in a colony that had been established by Catholics as an asylum for religious toleration. From that time we see the descendants of the sturdy pioneer lawmaker, together with their coreligionists, coming again into their rights. When the Anglo-American colonies formed their union to resist the unjust encroachments of the mother country, the Fenwicks rallied gallantly to the standard of freedom and independence. Foremost among them was Ignatius Fenwick of Wallington, the father of the future priest, organizer of Dominican life in the United States, and bishop of Cincinnati, Ohio. At the outbreak of actual hostilities, he enlisted in the Maryland militia as a commissioned officer, rising to the rank of colonel. From the start, he took a keen interest in the Maryland convention and the Maryland committee of public safety, and was a warm supporter and an active member of both. In 1776 he was elected delegate from Saint Mary's County, then the home of practically all the Maryland Fenwicks, to the committee chosen to frame the state's first constitution. And though broken in health, perhaps a result of exposure and hardships incident to the war, he held positions of importance in his native county until the date of his death.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Among the Fenwick names found in the *Muster Rolls of Maryland* as being in the Revolutionary War are, besides Colonel Ignatius, two or three



Ignatius, the youngest son of Richard Fenwick and his second wife, whose name is not known, married Eleanor Clarke of Piney Point, belonging to one of Maryland's best Catholic families. One of their sons, Ignatius Fenwick of Cherryfields was joined in wedlock with Mary, daughter of Edward and Ann Neale Cole, and through her became the father of Rev. John C. Fenwick (the first English-speaking American to become a Friar Preacher), and grandfather of the subject of this volume. The future bishop's mother was Sarah, daughter of Michael Taney and Sarah Brooke.<sup>25</sup>

Little Edward was born August 19, 1768. The place of his birth was Saint Mary's County, on the Patuxent River, whose great natural beauty has caused it, not inaptly, to be likened to the majestic Hudson. He was the fourth of a family of eight children, six boys and two girls. As is evident from their wills, both his grandfather and father were wealthy men for their day.

Richards (one a sergeant, one a corporal, and another a private in the Marine); Francis; Major Philip; Captain Philip; and Captain Ignatius, commander, first, of the *Lydia*, and then of the brigantine *Sally*. Enoch was in the colonial commissary department. And among the names of the committee chosen in Saint Mary's County to uphold the Convention of Annapolis in 1775 are those of John, Edward, Enoch and Ignatius Fenwick. The last mentioned was probably either Colonel Ignatius or his father, Ignatius Fenwick of Cherryfields.

<sup>25</sup> The four families mentioned here were among the oldest and most conspicuous of colonial Maryland. The Neales and Coles were Catholics when they came to America. The Brookes and Taney were not; but some of them were converted, and their descendants have remained in the Church.—The future bishop belonged to the sixth generation of Fenwicks in America. His family tree runs: (1) Cuthbert Fenwick and Jane Eltonhead. (2) Richard Fenwick and his second wife, name unknown. (3) Ignatius Fenwick and Eleanor Clarke. (4) Ignatius Fenwick of Cherryfields and Mary Cole. (5) Colonel Ignatius Fenwick of Wallington and Sarah Taney. (6) Edward Fenwick, the bishop. This descent differs considerably from some of the family trees that we have seen. But the old wills and other records at Leonardtown and Annapolis, Maryland, seem to leave no doubt as to the correctness of the pedigree which we have given. And it agrees with the later family trees that have been got up since the documents have been better arranged and become better known.



Colonel Ignatius Fenwick of Wallington, at the time of his death, possessed large landed estates, not only in various parts of his native county of Saint Mary's, but also in Charles and Prince George's counties. Thus, as the Fenwicks are said to have been among the most princely of southern gentlemen, one may more readily imagine than portray the boyhood days of little Edward at the manorial mansion that stood on the sloping hills, overlooking the calm, stately stream below. Perhaps the ideal picture of the homes of the well-to-do planters of Maryland in the distant past, drawn by a clever writer, may not be far from a counterpart of that where the subject of this sketch was born and passed his earliest years.

It is not easy [says Mr. Johnson] to picture the combined elegance and simplicity of those old homesteads—the appearance they presented of an aristocratic state mingled with good republican good-fellowship. The entrance to the place was, perhaps, through a wood of old oaks and chestnuts, that had passed their sapling growth a century before George Calvert, first Baron of Baltimore, appeared as a stripling in the English Court. Emerging from the wood, the road was lined with a double colonnade of locusts or beeches with footpaths between. Nearing the mansion, pines and furs replaced the deciduous trees, and the evergreen branches formed a symbol of the ever fresh hospitality awaiting the approaching guest.

Before the door stood the old elms, planted by the founder of the family, and the lawn was terraced in the English style. The turf—a special pride of the master of the house—was so thick and close that it would be hard to find a finger's breadth of earth without its blade of grass. Conifers stood at intervals over the half dozen acres forming the lawn, and at either end of the terrace a catalpa with a trunk of Californian proportions shaded a rustic seat. The house itself was in most cases a long, low structure of brick. The finest residences were remarkable for their

large and striking appearance. The rooms of the old houses were grouped about a large hallway in which some of the family usually sat. The walls everywhere were wainscotted to the ceiling. Sometimes the woodwork was finely carved and of rare material. Upon the walls hung the portraits of the ancestors of the family, often as far back as six or seven generations. A side-board in the dining-room displayed a portion of the plate, bearing the family crest. Flanking the plate stood a great army of glasses and decanters. For in the early days the proper discharge of the sacred duty of hospitality involved various strong potations.<sup>26</sup>

Around or near the mansion, of course, were clustered other buildings, such as the dwellings for the slaves or servants, the well-supplied smoke-house, from the roof of which hung huge quarters of mast-fed swine, and the heaping barns: all of which gave the home of the wealthy southern planter, in bygone times, the appearance of a village. No doubt the mansion of Colonel Ignatius Fenwick had also a special room, as was the custom with many of the better-to-do Catholic families of Maryland, if not an adjoining chapel, where the priest came to administer to the spiritual welfare of the family, servants and neighbors. It was likely in the family home or chapel that little Edward was baptized. Here too, perhaps, he received much of his early religious instruction, and eagerly drank in the words of the good Jesuit missionary that helped to nourish his vocation. Certainly, as may be seen in his after life, he learned to love and admire the Jesuit Fathers whose zealous labors had been witnessed by all Maryland. Probably, indeed, had not the Society of Jesus been suppressed at the time, he would have joined the religious body that had done so much for Catholicity in his native colony, instead of that established by the apostolic Saint Dominic.

<sup>26</sup> JOHNSON, *Old Maryland Manors*, pp. 8-9.

Though the future apostle was blessed with affluence, a happy home and good Catholic parents, he was early to pass through the ordeal of sorrow and affliction, which perhaps, in the designs of providence, was intended to try his young soul and to prepare him for the work that God had decreed he should accomplish. Barely had he attained the use of reason, when the discontent occasioned by England's maltreatment of her colonies broke out into the conflict known as the American Revolution. When Colonel Ignatius Fenwick, true patriot that he was, enlisted in his country's cause, Edward's mother was largely deprived of her husband's protection, and the family of the ministrations of their father. The terror and hardships of those days along the shores of the Chesapeake are known to all. To a mother, often unprotected, with a number of dependent children and surrounded by dangers, they must have been specially appalling. In fact, Mrs. Fenwick appears to have died during the war, possibly succumbing to its horrors. Indeed, the conflict had not long come to an end with the Treaty of Paris, when Colonel Ignatius, whose bravery and virtues deserve an honorable place in history, passed to his eternal reward. This was in March, 1784. The double loss of both parents was all the severer for the seven surviving children, because the eldest, James, was the only son who had attained his majority, while the younger were still in need of a mother's affection, the wisdom of a father's guidance and the support of his stronger hand.

His after life as a religious, priest and bishop gives color to the tradition of Edward's early piety and purity of heart. But, while there may have been outward signs of a divine call, there seems to be no solid ground for the

assertion, which one sometimes reads, that from his earliest years he longed to consecrate himself to the service of the Church, and that his vocation was carefully fostered by his parents. The idea appears to have laid hold on him only after the death of his parents, and while he was a student of the English Dominican Fathers, at their college of the Holy Cross, Bornheim, Belgium.<sup>27</sup>

Of Edward Fenwick's early education little is known. But the fact that, as Father Raymond Palmer tells us, he was "educated latterly at Bornheim College," that he entered that institution, late in 1784, "to complete his humanities," and that he finished his classical course at Holy Cross and at Saint Omer's (Liège is probably meant) in somewhat less than four years, would indicate that he had made considerable progress in his studies at a prior date.<sup>28</sup> The scant school equipment of Maryland at that period and the affluence of his father lead us to believe that, after the custom which obtained among many of the wealthier planters, the youth's first steps in learning were taken in the paternal mansion under private tutors. In the light of Palmer's statements, it is quite likely that the future American missionary and bishop had been sent to Liège or some other European

<sup>27</sup> His father, for instance, in his will, makes Edward, when he becomes twenty-one years of age, co-executor of the estate with his brother James. The will is dated March 16, and was probated, April 6, 1784. (Register of Wills Office, Leonardtown, Maryland, Liber J. J., No. I, p. 259.)

<sup>28</sup> PALMER, *Anglia Dominicana* (MSS.), Part III A, p. 722 (Archives of the Dominican Fathers, Haverstock Hill, London, England); same, *Obituary notices of the Friar-Preachers, or Dominicans, of the English Province*, p. 26; and same, notes for the writer.—The English Jesuits established a college at Saint Omer, French Flanders, about 1590. In 1762 or 1763, owing to the persecutions of the French Parliament, it was transferred to Bruges. Thence, after the suppression of the Society, in 1773, it was moved to Liège. The institution seems to have retained its original name, in common use at least, at Bruges and Liège. Hence, perhaps, the use of the word "St. Omer's" by Palmer.



college near the end of the Revolutionary War, and before his father's death.

Colonel Ignatius Fenwick's will, in addition to giving evidence of his own fair attainments, shows that he was solicitous for the schooling of his children. Earnestly does he exhort James, the eldest child and executor, to see that his younger brothers shall receive "a good and genteel education" befitting their station in life. The same solicitous exhortation is then addressed to Edward, the second son, to fulfill this paternal request, in case of James' death. This also seems to show that James' education was then completed, and that Edward's was under way.<sup>29</sup>

But it is now time to pass to a new era in our subject's life—an era that was to prepare the way for a notable and fruitful career.

<sup>29</sup> The names of Colonel Ignatius Fenwick's children, and the order of their births, were: James, Mary, Sarah, Edward, Michael, Thomas, Nicholas and Charles. James married, first, Mary Lancaster; secondly, Teresa Brent. He died in 1823. He reared no family by his second wife; but by the first he had three children, Edward, Mary and Henrietta. Edward appears to have died without issue. Mary married William Brent, and Henrietta married William Plowden. Both had descendants who became conspicuous in Maryland and elsewhere. Mary, Colonel Ignatius Fenwick's second child, died in girlhood and before her father. Sarah married Nicholas Young, who belonged to one of Maryland's best known families. She was the mother of Rev. Nicholas Dominic Young, the celebrated Dominican missionary, Brother Robert Young, who died in Kentucky as a Dominican novice, and Rev. Benjamin A. Young, S.J. She was also the grandmother of Rev. Nicholas Raymond Young, O.P. Many of her descendants have been useful members of various communities of nuns in different parts of the country. Michael Fenwick became a physician, and married Ann Aminta Manning. Both died young, leaving a daughter, of whom we have been unable to find any trace after her childhood. Thomas also became a physician. He married Sarah Young, sister to Nicholas Young mentioned above, and through his sons, Notley, Ignatius and Edward, became the progenitor of apparently the only descendants of Colonel Ignatius Fenwick who still bear the family name. Nicholas seems to have died without issue; and Charles is said to have been drowned while still in his boyhood.



## CHAPTER II

### STUDENT ABROAD: BECOMES A DOMINICAN

IT was England's spirit of intolerance and persecution towards Catholics, after her apostasy, that inspired the first two Lords Baltimore, George and Cecelius Calvert, with the idea of founding the colony of Maryland as a "Land of Sanctuary," in order that those belonging to their Church might find in the wilderness of the New World a peaceful home, and worship God with safety and freedom according to their faith and their conscience. The same intolerant spirit had long before compelled the religious orders in Great Britain to seek refuge on Continental Europe. There they established colleges for the education of English Catholic youth, and novitiates for the reception and training of those who desired to enter their respective organizations. From these institutions, during all the years when the gallows and the rack, the pillory and the quartering knife were busy with their bloody work, zealous missionaries returned at the peril of their lives to keep the smouldering spark of faith aglow in the hearts of their fellow-countrymen.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> However greatly those of us with English blood in our veins regret the fact, historic truth and candor oblige us to confess that nowhere have religious intolerance and persecution been so heartless and brutal, or carried to such excesses as in England. The darkest pages in Christian history are those which treat of the cruelties and barbarities to which the Catholics of Britain and Ireland were long subjected. Although a few of the clergy of every class, in the early days of the apostasy, proved faithful to their sacred calling, the great mass of them, both secular and regular, stood staunch in the hour of trial. They were hunted like wild beasts, and scat-

The Dominicans were among the orders that suffered most in the long period of relentless oppression. At one time, in fact, the English province of Friars Preacher was on the verge of becoming extinct. Until 1658, or for more than a century, with the exception of a short respite under Queen Mary, it had depended upon foreigners for recruits, or upon foreign convents for the training of young Englishmen who sought admittance into its ranks. But during this year, Father Philip Thomas Howard, a scion of one of Britain's noblest families and later a cardinal in the Roman *Curia*, founded the College and Convent of the Holy Cross, at Bornheim, Belgium, as a means of saving the British branch of the Order from extinction, and of better fostering the cause of Catholicity in his native land. It was a fortunate undertaking; for although the institution was destined to experience many trials and vicissitudes, eventually it prospered and accomplished the purposes for which it was established. But not merely was Holy Cross a source of much good for the Friars Preacher of England, and of many blessings for their country; it became, in the course of time, an instrument in the hands of God for furthering the advancement of religion in the newly born American republic. It was a happy circumstance that a son of Lord Baltimore's former colony, and a descendant of one of the noblest and most exemplary among its early settlers, was chosen by Providence to be the leader of so holy an enterprise, and was

tered to the four winds. History tells us of their sufferings, and of how they sacrificed their lives at the call of duty. The English colleges, seminaries and religious novitiates established on the continent during the penal days saved the Church in England from total destruction—in the England that was only lately so truly and so beautifully Catholic.

prepared for his work in the institution established by Father Howard.<sup>2</sup>

Those of Maryland's wealthier Catholic young men who sought their education abroad, were long wont to be sent to the Jesuit college at Saint Omer, France. And from 1762 or 1763, when this college was transferred to Bruges, the quaint old town of Austrian Flanders became the Parnassus to which such students directed their steps to worship at the shrines of Athena and Apollo. Nor were vocations wanting among these more fortunate colonials. But in 1773, just when the Jesuit college at Bruges was being disbanded in obedience to the ill-advised brief *Dominus ac Redemptor Noster* of Clement XIV, suppressing the Society of Jesus, and perhaps as a consequence of this unfortunate event, John Fenwick, of whom mention has been made, entered the college of the English Dominicans at Bornheim.<sup>3</sup> He was the son of Ignatius and Mary Cole Fenwick, and an uncle of little Edward who was then commencing his sixth year. John himself was but a child of fourteen or fifteen. The call of God appears to have been in his heart even then. Four years later, on the completion of his humanities, he joined the Order of Saint Dominic, at the same place, and was the first English-speaking American, of whom there is any record, to become a Friar Preacher.<sup>4</sup> At the time of which we

<sup>2</sup> For the history of the Bornheim College and Convent, and the labors of Father Howard, see PALMER, *Life of Philip Thomas Howard, O.P., Cardinal of Norfolk*, London, 1867.

<sup>3</sup> Three cousins of the subject of this biography, Benedict J., Enoch and George Fenwick, subsequently entered the restored Society of Jesus, becoming noted priests. Benedict was the second bishop of Boston.

<sup>4</sup> For the writer's sketch of Rev. John Fenwick see *The Catholic Historical Review*, I, 17 ff. But we have since discovered that the family tree used in this article on Father Fenwick is not accurate. Another discovery is that the date of his death is August 20, 1815.

speak, late in 1784, he was almost ready for ordination to the priesthood. But now Holy Cross College was to open its doors to another American student who was destined to become not only one of its most distinguished alumni, but one of the bright ornaments of the Church in his native land—Edward Dominic Fenwick.

It is not known whether Edward Fenwick was in America at the time of his father's death, March, 1784, or whether he was prosecuting his studies in some European college. If he were at home, his desire for knowledge must have been impelling. For his entrance into Holy Cross, late in the fall term of 1784,<sup>5</sup> shows that he could not have tarried long in Maryland after the demise of his parent. A voyage across the Atlantic on the slow, clumsy sailing vessels of that remote period, unlike pleasure jaunts in the floating palaces to which our generation has grown accustomed, was often a matter of months, as well as full of trials, dangers and hardships.

Be this as it may, providence was now soon to lay strong hold on the valiant student, and divine grace to begin directing him towards a work that was to make his name not merely conspicuous in the annals of American Catholicity, but sacred to its history. It was a propitious time for such influences. In Catholic Belgium he saw his Church in all the splendor of her ceremonial and in all the glory of her history. Never before, perhaps, had the young American so realized her power for good. On all sides were to be seen priests and religious. Great was the harvest of their faithful labors. Along the by-paths where he took his lonely strolls—in almost every solitary nook he chanced upon—were statues or little

<sup>5</sup> PALMER, *Anglia Dominicana* (MSS.), p. 722, notes for the writer, and *Obituary Notices*, as above, p. 26.



shrines erected by the devotion of the people. Before these he not infrequently discovered peasants or even persons of noble birth on their knees and rapt in prayer. These things could not fail to touch a pure and tender soul. A favorite saying of the future priest was that God "ordereth all things mightily, but sweetly." Such we believe to have been the case in the present instance.

At Bornheim, Edward Fenwick learned the life-work of Father Howard, with traditions of whom Holy Cross was redolent. The candid young American could not but admire a man whose zeal had caused him to spend himself for the restoration of Catholicity and his Order in his native land. The college and convent which the cardinal had founded in the little Flemish town were at the height of their fame and prosperity, giving a liberal Christian education to the Catholic youth of England and sending home missionaries zealous to promote the cause of religion. Edward's piety and purity of heart made him all the more susceptible to impressions that filled him with pious designs. Thus it was that the Maryland scion of the Fenwick house conceived the idea that, as Howard had done so much for the Church of Great Britain, so might he accomplish something for that of his cherished America. As Howard had used the Order of Saint Dominic as an instrument for the good he had effected, so would he enter the institute he had learned to love and admire, and strive to establish it in his beloved Maryland, whence it would send forth missionaries for the dissemination of Catholic truth throughout the land of his birth.

God, spiritual writers assure us, tries those whom He especially loves. So it was with our American aspirant to the habit of Saint Dominic. His health was delicate,



possibly in part as a result of the strain and terrors incident to the Revolutionary War. At home he had been accustomed to the open air and outdoor life. Thus, for he was ever industrious, the confinement of a student's life bore hard upon his fragile frame. More than once it seemed as though he could not persevere, even if he did not succumb to some attack of illness. It was heaven's way of further purifying the ardent youth's affections, and of preparing him for the higher and holier things in store for him. In spite of all handicaps, however, an indomitable will enabled Edward to complete his humanities by the close of the school term of 1787-1788. Then, tradition tells us, his superiors sent him to spend some time travelling on the continent for the betterment of his health and further to test his vocation. But if the latter motive instigated this vacation, it was because even wise and prudent men often are not able to read the signs of the Master.

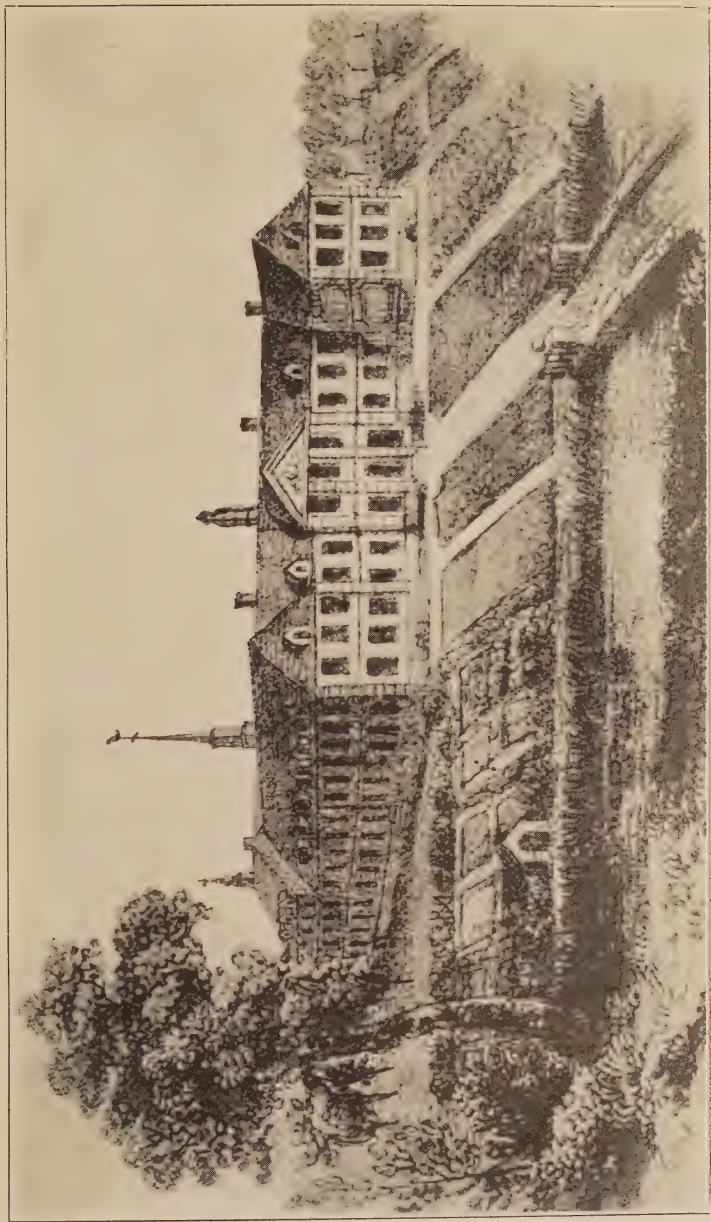
Edward Fenwick was just completing his twentieth year when he matriculated at Bornheim. Because of his talents and education, energy and industry, wealth and magnetic personality, together with the prominence and influence of his family in the state of Maryland, a not unbrilliant future lay before him in the world. He might have looked forward to any position in the gift of his fellow-citizens. A less spiritual-minded young man would have succumbed to the temptation. But not so with the son of Colonel Ignatius Fenwick. He had not spent his time in the study hall with dreams of and aspirations for earthly greatness, professional success, affluence or social triumph. The thoughts and affections of his angelic heart went out, first and last, to God, to the sanctification of his own soul, to the estab-

lishment of the Order of Saint Dominic in his native land as a means of gathering his fellow-countrymen to Christ and His Church. Accordingly, when the young student's vacation came to an end, he returned to his alma mater to begin his religious novitiate.

After the retreat of ten days which all must make before entering the Order, Holy Cross Convent, Bornheim, September 4, 1788, was again the scene of one of those solemn and edifying spectacles for which it had become noted, the investiture with the white robe and black mantle of the Dominican.<sup>6</sup> It was the second time that an American had figured there in such a ceremony. We may imagine, but can not portray, the impression it must have made upon one of the youthful novice's deep piety. To his baptismal name of Edward he now added that of Dominic in honor of the blessed founder of the institute he had joined. The purpose of the Church in bestowing the name of a saint upon her children at their baptism is to give them an exemplar after which to pattern their Christian lives, and to place them under a special patron who will intercede for them in heaven. In the same spirit, most religious organizations, at the reception of the habit, confer upon their members a name different from that which they bore in the world. This second saint is to be their protector in their new life, and the model whose example they are to emulate in their efforts to attain perfection.

Keenly realizing this idea of the Order, of which he hoped soon to become a full-fledged member, our ardent neophyte set himself to copy the life of Saint Dominic in his own. The result was that, with advancement in holiness, he grew in favor before God and man. But

<sup>6</sup> See note 4.



HOLY CROSS CONVENT AND COLLEGE, BORNHEIM, BELGIUM





the virtues in which he seems to have striven principally to emulate the holy patriarch Dominic, were kindliness, humility, contempt of earthly possessions, purity of heart, and zeal for souls. These admirable qualities, indeed, shone conspicuously through all his career as a missionary and as a bishop, making him ever and always a true gentleman, an ideal priest and man of God, a model harvester of souls and ambassador of Christ. They won hearts when all things else must have failed. The young American's master of novices was Father Dominic Verschaffelt, a Belgian. That he formed so deeply spiritual a man speaks well for his own religious character.

Of Brother Dominic's simple novitiate, or the twelve-month that intervened between the reception of the habit and the taking of the religious vows, little is known beyond what we have related. Even this has come down to us rather through tradition than through records. The same tradition tells us that the year passed quickly and happily. Yet, because of the tyrannical edict of Joseph II, Emperor of Austria, forbidding religious professions before the age of five and twenty years, not until nearly seven months after the term of his probation had expired, could the future bishop be permitted to bind himself to God by this solemn act. On March 26, 1790, however, now that the emperor was no more, Brother Dominic was the central figure in another interesting ceremony at Bornheim. Kneeling before his superior, Rev. Charles Bullock, in the presence of his sacramental God and the community, Brother Dominic read aloud the words that made him a Friar Preacher, prefacing them with the declaration that he took the step of his own free will and choice. The document, as it still stands in his own handwriting, reads:



*Jesus, Mary and Dominic* :—I, Brother Edward Dominic Fenwick, an American, born in lawful wedlock, and twenty-one years of age, declare that I entered the Order of Friars Preacher through no force, fear or compulsion; but, as I confidently trust, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. I also declare that I wish to remain in the same Order and to make my profession. In testimony whereof I sign this with my own hand.

EDWARD DOMINIC FENWICK.

Done in the Convent of the Holy Cross, belonging to the English Dominican Fathers, Bornheim, this 26th day of March, 1790.

Then follows the formula of profession:

I, Brother Edward Dominic Fenwick, make my religious profession and promise obedience to God, to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to our Holy Father Saint Dominic, and to you, Very Rev. Father Charles Bullock, prior of this Convent of Bornheim and holding the place of the Most Rev. Balthassar de Quinones, Master General of the Friars Preacher, and his successors, according to the Rule of Saint Augustine and the Constitutions of the Order of Preachers. To you and to your successors I promise obedience until death.

BROTHER DOMINIC FENWICK.

March 26, [1790].<sup>7</sup>

It were hard to conceive a ceremony more simple or more sublime than that of the profession of a Friar Preacher. Its beauty, significance and heroism are accentuated by its very simplicity. A man gives himself wholly and unreservedly to God until death. And he does so in a few brief words, shorn of all pomp and rhetoric. In the present instance, the formula was typical of the life of the one who thus consecrated himself to the praise and the service of his Creator. Thoroughly did Brother Dominic understand the import of what he was

<sup>7</sup> Translated into English from the book of professions of Holy Cross Convent, Bornheim (Archives of the English Dominicans, Haverstock Hill, London, England).

doing; firmly had he resolved to be true to his new life; faithfully was he to fulfill its obligations. First, as he knew, came the sacrifice of obedience by which he voluntarily renounced his own will and made it subject in all things lawful to that of his superiors. He was to labor, not merely for his own personal sanctification, but for the salvation of souls. This latter he was to do by preaching and teaching the word of God, for such is the vocation of every Dominican—the distinctive purpose for which Saint Dominic established his Order, and which all things else must subserve. It was an object of which the American friar never lost sight. But back of all this was not only the ardent desire, but the determination—God willing and the authorities permitting—to raise the standard of the apostolic Guzman in Maryland, and to make his native colony a center whence his brethren might carry the message of divine truth into every corner of the growing republic.

But, to give the reader a more thorough appreciation of the life and character of the apostolic friar, a further word on the meaning of the religious profession in the Order of Saint Dominic is necessary. In this connection, however, we cannot do better than to quote from a previous work.

The new member promises obedience, first of all, to God, to show that he obeys Him rather than man. He promises obedience to the Blessed Virgin, whereby he is reminded that the Queen of Heaven is the patroness and protectrix of the Order, to whom all its members owe a special filial devotion. While the name of the visible head of the Church is not mentioned, every one knows that the Order and its brethren are subject to the Sovereign Pontiff in all things. The name of Saint Dominic is included that each newly professed member may the more readily realize that the

founder of the Order, next to the Divine Master, is the ideal after which he should strive to model his life as a religious. And, finally, the reason for making the profession to the local superior, not in his own name, but as acting in the place of the Master General, is to signify where the supreme authority and the principle of unity in the Order lie. But, as is shown by the last sentence in the form of profession, this by no means frees the subject from the strictest obligation of full and complete obedience to every superior under whom he may be placed. Obedience, indeed, is regarded as the very essence of the Order's life. It is, in fact, expressly to emphasize this important truth that it is the only one of the three religious vows mentioned in the formula of profession—those of poverty and chastity being contained in obedience, as beauty and sweetness in the rose, or as purity and sanctity in the soul.

At his profession the Friar Preacher takes upon himself the obligation of making the rule of Saint Augustine and the constitutions of the Order of Saint Dominic, in addition to canon law and the Catholic code of morality, the guide of his life. He binds himself to strive after perfection; and for this reason, he may no longer rest content with the observance of things of precept merely, but also must strive to follow the evangelical counsels.<sup>8</sup>

These things, we may rest assured, had been the subject of much reflection on the part of Edward Fenwick. As with a brave heart the young friar took these obligations upon himself, so with trusting confidence in the help of God he founded his hopes of realizing his pious designs for his native America on the very words of the formula of profession and the spirit of the Order he had joined. Both the guidance and the support he thence derived will, we trust, be revealed in the course of these pages.

<sup>8</sup> O'DANIEL, *Very Rev. Charles Hyacinth McKenna*, pp. 48-49.

## CHAPTER III

### ORDINATION AND EARLY PRIESTHOOD

A FRIAR Preacher's course of higher studies, unless made, at least in part, before entering the Order, begins with his profession, and covers a period of from seven to nine years. But in those days of stress, when priests were few and the labors of the missions and the college great, the English Fathers seem to have been obliged at times to obtain a dispensation from this rigid law of their institute. For this reason, Brother Dominic likely began his philosophical studies while yet a simple novice. Indeed, from the time his term of probation expired, owing to the fact of which we have spoken, he was employed in the college whilst pursuing his own studies. This was too much for one of his frail constitution, and his strength was so undermined that he did not recover it until after he had returned to America. In this way his course of philosophy and theology was often interrupted. Yet his retentive memory and good natural parts enabled the future missionary to acquire a good liberal education, and to obtain more than an ordinary knowledge of the divine sciences. So, too, did he, by his habit of reading, amass a fund of useful information. That he was well prepared for the work that was so near to his heart, is shown by his after life.

The advancement of the young American to holy orders was rapid. He received subdeaconship March 24, 1792, and was made deacon on the second day of the following June. Both orders were conferred at



Ghent by the Right Rev. Ferdinand M. Lobkowitz. Brother Dominic was raised to the priesthood, it would seem, on the Lenten Ember Saturday, February 23, 1793—no doubt by the same prelate, and in the same city.<sup>1</sup> In this case, his first holy sacrifice of the mass was likely offered up in the conventual church of Holy Cross, Bornheim, on Sunday, February 24, 1793. Doubtless his ordination was hastened partly by reasons of health, and partly by the disturbed condition of Continental Europe's political horizon. But it made no change in the young Dominican's life, other than it gave him the privilege of saying mass day by day.

So ran his course along, with occasional disturbances by the French soldiers and periods of alarm caused by the success of the revolution, until the late spring of 1794, when the onward rush of the red revolutionists towards the north made it imperative for the Bornheim community to seek refuge in England. Their flight was made none too soon, for it was with great difficulty that they escaped with their lives. To save Holy Cross College and Convent from the ruthless hands of a soldiery maddened by success and opposition, Father Edward D. Fenwick, whose American citizenship, it was thought, owing to the friendly relations between France and the United States, would cause him to be respected, was appointed procurator of the institution and left in

<sup>1</sup> Records of the Cathedral of Saint-Bavon, Ghent. The exact dates of Father Fenwick's ordination as subdeacon and deacon are given. But the only record regarding his ordination to the priesthood is: "*Die 13 Februarii, 1793, praevis examine concessae sunt dimissoriales litterae ad Sacrum Presbyteratus Ordinem Fr. Dominico Fenwick, Ordinis FF. Praed., conventus Bornhemiensis religioso diacono.*" Ghent, however, is generally given as the place of his ordination. The date of his examination and the fact that orders were usually conferred on the Ember Days make it more than likely that he was ordained priest on Saturday, February 23, 1793.

charge of the property. It was a perilous position, but he accepted it bravely.<sup>2</sup>

About the time the fugitives landed safely in London, the victorious French troops entered Bornheim, pillaged the little town, and set fire to the college. The flames, however, were soon extinguished, and the buildings saved. But Father Fenwick was treated with scant courtesy. Led away a prisoner, it was not without difficulty that he secured his liberty. Nor was it until he had undergone many hardships and imminent dangers to his life, that he finally made his way to England.<sup>3</sup> Until his death, thirty-eight years later, it is said, the holy man, convinced that his preservation was miraculous, ever acknowledged in pious gratitude that he had been saved only through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin.

Thus, like his prototype and first American forefather, Cuthbert Fenwick, Father Edward could claim that he had suffered imprisonment for the sake of his religion. Or as another writer has cleverly expressed it: "Thus may the Catholics of Ohio bless God that they have had for their first bishop an heroic confessor of the faith—the only one of our hierarchy who could glory, like St. Paul, in having borne the chain for Jesus Christ, or place on his escutcheon the apostolic emblem of a love for his divine Master that was stronger than death."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> PALMER, *Philip Thomas Howard, O.P., Cardinal of Norfolk*, pp. 225 ff. This author gives a rather detailed account of the trials of the Bornheim community at this time, and of their flight to England. And it is interesting to note (page 227) that the Church of East Flanders was spared many indignities from the red-handed revolutionists by General Eustace, an American officer who had been placed in charge of that part of the country.

<sup>3</sup> PALMER, *Anglia Dominicana*, notes and *Obituary Notices*, *ut supra*, and *Life of Cardinal Howard*, pp. 229 and 233-34; *The Catholic Almanac*, 1848, p. 58.

<sup>4</sup> *The Catholic Almanac*, 1848, p. 58.

In the meantime, the English fathers had secured an old mansion at Carshalton, in the county of Surrey, some ten or twelve miles from London, as a home for the community that had fled from Bornheim. Here the subject of our sketch, on gaining England, joined his brethren. A college was now started at Carshalton to take the place of that which had been suppressed on the continent. Accordingly, we soon find Edward again filling the post of professor at this new institution, and doing what he could to make up for the loss he had suffered in his own classes through ill health, professorial labors and misfortune. But in the fall of 1800 he was sent to Woburn Lodge, one of the missions attended by the English Dominicans, to round out his studies under the noted theologian, Father James V. Bowyer. From Woburn Lodge he returned, in 1802, to his former duties at Carshalton. Now, however, he was given the additional charge of procurator or syndic for the convent.<sup>5</sup>

Through all these vicissitudes and troublous times, which no doubt served as a further preparation for the work before him, the young American priest kept uppermost in mind the purpose he had in view when entering the Order of Saint Dominic. For more than ten years he had served the English province with fidelity and profit. He had filled positions of trust, stood high in his community, and was loved and admired by his brethren. The temper of the public mind in England was still so adverse to religious orders that the college at Carshalton, it was now seen, could not hope to prosper. That at Bornheim, it is true, had been reopened. But the seething spirit of the French Revolution, the

<sup>5</sup> PALMER, *Anglia Dominicana*, notes and *Obituary Notices*, *ut supra*.

turmoil and the devastation that prevailed everywhere, together with the scarcity of priests, conspired to thwart the success of this institution also, although it had formerly enjoyed great repute and had been a favorite resort, not only of British, but of Belgian youths in search of a liberal education.<sup>6</sup>

Thus the prospects of the English province of Friars Preacher were again gloomy indeed. Fenwick himself was nearing middle age. Accordingly, he felt that the time was come, when he could and should take steps towards putting his pious project into execution. In fact, although we have found no express assertion of his to that effect, the good priest seems to have regarded such a thing as so sacred a duty, that one is inclined to believe that he had taken a vow, if the permission were granted him, to establish his Order in the United States. Quite likely his zest in the matter had been whetted by letters he had received from home, representing the need of missionaries in the country and begging him to return to Maryland.

The prospects of success for the undertaking were the more propitious because the property left the humble friar by his father was still in Maryland, and he had been able to obtain but little proceeds from it during his residence abroad. This could now be used in aid of the establishment Father Fenwick had so much at heart. Another circumstance in the good priest's favor was the presence in Rome of a learned Irish Dominican, who had long taken a keen interest in the missions of the United States, Father Richard L. Concanen, then assistant to the Superior General of the Order, and later

<sup>6</sup> PALMER, *Philip Thomas Howard, O.P., Cardinal of Norfolk*, pp. 234 ff.; *Anglia Dominicana*, notes and *Obituary Notices*, *ut supra*.



the first bishop of New York. Father Concanen's kindly spirit and zeal for the promotion of religion were known through all Europe. But with Fenwick, for he was first and last a dutiful, obedient religious, everything had to be done through the ordinary channels. Accordingly, his first step was to obtain the permission of his provincial, Rev. Thomas A. Plunkett, and the approval of Archbishop Carroll. Succeeding in this, he broached the subject to Concanen, in the humble, unpretentious way characteristic of his life, using Father Gerard Albert Plunkett, a brother of the provincial, as an intermediary.<sup>7</sup>

The two earliest documents bearing on this interesting business cannot now be found. But a number of Fenwick's later letters, together with one of Concanen's, are still extant. If we may judge from these, the American priest's first proposition was to found simply a convent in America subject to the authority of the English provincial. The Irish friar's broader experience, however, convinced him that it was better to begin with a distinct house or congregation under the immediate jurisdiction of the Order's Master General. Thus the correspondence, almost from the beginning, turns on what Father Fenwick doubtless hoped would be the outgrowth of what he was to commence, an American branch of his Order in the land of his birth. Because they throw much light on the affair, and serve to reveal the characters of those who participated in it, we cannot do better than give even lengthy extracts from some of these letters. Thus, for instance, the American friar writes to his new-found friend at Rome:

<sup>7</sup> For a sketch of Bishop Concanen see the writer's articles on him in *The Catholic Historical Review*, I, 400-421, and II, 19-46.

*Rev. Dear Sir:*

I am gratefully sensible of your kind remembrance of me in your last letter to our worthy friend, Rev. Mr. Plunkett, and equally so of your zealous attention to my vague proposal of an establishment of our Order in my native country, where the cries of religion and repeated solicitations of my friends pressingly call for *me* and *all who* feel for their spiritual wants. Your known zeal, Rev. Sir, for the honor of God and of our holy Order, your tendered benevolence in my regard, not only embolden me to write candidly to you on the subject, but encourage me to place entire confidence in your friendship and charitable advice on the subject. God knows, I am very unequal to the task, destitute of all spiritual talents, void of all acquired knowledge, and unprovided with any Brother Laborers to carry on the work I wish to begin. But, as with the grace of God all things are possible, as I know that He “*qui omnia fortiter gubernat et omnia suaviter disponit*” [who governeth all things mightily and ordereth them sweetly], has often made use of the weakest and most illiterate beings to produce the greatest works, I found my hope in that divine Providence of succeeding in an affair, which according to all human probability would, I know, be rash and madness otherwise to attempt.

Our Provincial, Rev. Mr. Underhill, has given his opinion on the subject which I have begged of him to communicate to you, [and] which you will be pleased to submit to our Vicar General.<sup>8</sup> And I confidently trust our worthy General will decide and dispose of me according to the decrees of Heaven. To him, therefore, I look up as to the representative of our Heavenly Father in my regard, whose will I wish to know and whose orders and instructions I will cheerfully comply with as soon as intimated to me; but beg leave again to observe to your Reverence, that I have nothing in my favor but a good will, as I presume, and the

<sup>8</sup> The real family name of the English provincial was Plunkett. During the dark penal days in England priests, to conceal their identity, often went under an alias. The custom still existed in the days of Fenwick. There were two Fathers Plunkett at the time, and both were more commonly known by the alias Underhill than by their proper names. They were brothers, and Underhill was the maiden name of their mother. Both names, however, are found in the letters.

temporal means Almighty God has blessed me with. My paternal estate in America consists of ten or twelve hundred acres of land, some small houses, a proportionable share of *negroes*,<sup>9</sup> *live stock* and a certain capital in American funds.

Continuing his letter, Father Fenwick tells the General's assistant of the carelessness of his brother, under whose administration the paternal estate is placed, and of how little he himself has received from it. From this he concludes the necessity of going to America, if only to ascertain the value of the estate, and to secure his part. His age and delicate health are also given as reasons for beginning the project as soon as possible. In the latter connection, after unduly belittling his mental attainments in a way so characteristic of truly humble men, he remarks:

As to my physical condition, it is precarious. I am not very healthy. Should Almighty God call me out of the world before my desired plan is executed, my relations would of course come forward for my property. They would, by law, inherit it and all hopes of any intended establishment would disappear with the means thereof. These considerations I wish to submit to our General's paternal care and to your friendly opinion.<sup>10</sup>

Returning to the subject of co-laborers, the humble religious singles out his life-long friend, Rev. Samuel T. Wilson, the noted theologian who was then superior

<sup>9</sup> The reader will remember that in the days of slavery nearly every white family in the south had its negroes. Clergymen also possessed them. Those belonging to priests, however, because of the universal good treatment they received, were considered exceptionally fortunate.

<sup>10</sup> Father Fenwick, in this letter, says that he is thirty-seven years of age. But his own statement, given in a formal document at the time of his profession, and other reasons show that he was then only five and thirty. Several of his letters prove him to have been somewhat careless in regard to dates. Similarly, through all his life, his humility led him so to belittle his attainments as to almost impugn the known truth—a failing, however, not uncommon to men of his genuine humility and holiness.

at Bornheim, as one whom he is particularly anxious to have join in the enterprise. Of Father Wilson's willingness to co-operate with him he feels certain, if only the General's wish were intimated to him. Hinting that he will have more to say in the future in regard to this distinguished scholar, the good priest thus closes his letter, beautiful in its humility and simplicity:

This and other reflections I shall reserve and make free to propose to your Reverence as soon as I know the General's orders concerning the *point in question*, whether I am to go over to America and when. Meanwhile I beg a share of your friendship, good advice and pious prayers, that I may always act conformably to the will of God, and remain, Rev. Dear Sir, respectfully your grateful and obedient humble servant,

BROTHER DOMINIC FENWICK.

Carshalton Academy, Surrey,  
March 15, 1803.<sup>11</sup>

As the reader will doubtless notice, this letter, like its predecessor, was entrusted to Father Gerard Plunkett to be forwarded to its destination. The frank, open-hearted American priest, even when dealing with the highest authorities in the Order, would do nothing unknown to his immediate superiors. Nor did his candor and docile humility fail to attract the attention of Concanen, or to win his good-will and confidence. Perhaps, indeed, this trait of Fenwick went far towards gaining an early decision in favor of the proposed new province across the Atlantic. But, now that the project was under way, the General's assistant, owing likely to Father Plunkett's dilatoriness, preferred to deal directly with the future apostle himself. For this reason, he writes in reply:

<sup>11</sup> Archives of the Dominican Master General, Rome, Codex XIII, 731.



MINERVA, ROME, the 19th November, 1803.

*Dear and Rev. Sir.*

I received very late your much esteemed favor of the 15th March enclosed in a letter from Rev. Mr. Plunkett, dated 8th September. As our correspondence may become frequent and interesting, you will be pleased in future to write to me directly, with the address: Rev. Doctor Luke Concanen, Minerva, Rome. —The modest, ingenuous and religious manner, in which you expose your wish and attempt of establishing a Convent of our Holy Order in your native country, induces me to look upon the conceived plan and undertaking as an inspiration from Heaven; and I feel a strong internal impulse to second your pious and magnanimous efforts as much as [is] in my power.

I have in effect, on receipt of your kind letter, communicated the business to our Most Rev. Father the Vicar General, and found him disposed and propitious towards our project. We conferred together on the means and preparatory steps to be taken in such an important affair. One of the most necessary conditions, after securing some little funds for supporting the new Church, and your co-operators, seems to be the consent and encouragement of the Right Rev. Bishop. But Father Plunkett tells me that the most worthy Doctor Carroll is already well affected, and encourages the scheme. Our good Vicar General asked me what companions could you take with you for the new foundation? And, considering the scarcity of subjects in the Province of England, he suggested that you could make a choice of a few zealous and exemplary Friars, either Flemish or French. This, in my opinion, is one of the most delicate points to be looked after, the choice of persons of disinterested zeal and experienced probity. I am confident that His Most Rev. Paternity would permit you to take along with you *any one qualified* Religious even of that *Province*. Should you have the fortune to succeed in your meritorious attempt, I agreed with the Vicar General that the new Convent should be under his own immediate jurisdiction and patronage, until hereafter, [when], with the blessing of Heaven, you could form a little American Province after the example of the *Irish Augustinians*, who have *lately instituted one* at Philadelphia. This seems expedient, considering the aversion

your countrymen have to English influence of any kind in their country. As soon as the sacred work shall take footing, you will have the Apostolical permission to admit and profess Novices in your new Convent.

The Superior General's assistant now tells how glad he is that the English provincial agrees with Father Fenwick's views, and consents to his plan. Then he proceeds to say:

*Rest assured* that no encouragement will be wanting from *this quarter*. Great and illustrious Provinces have had their origin and commencement, in former ages, in as weak and humble appearance as has the present. But nothing is impossible to God, and I firmly hold that this is His holy will. *It now remains* that you *resolve* and determine *what you are to do*. You want *no other permission for repairing to America*. When matters will be disposed and concerted by you and your friends, you shall have the General's Letters Patent, *pro facultate fundandi novum Conventum* [for founding a new Convent], and other necessary papers. I'll expect the pleasure of your answer with the due information of what you have done, and are to do. And begging a share in your good prayers, I am, with sincere and fraternal regard and affection,

My Dear and Rev. Father Fenwick,  
your faithful and humble servant,  
BROTHER LUKE CONCANEN.

P.S. . . . May the Almighty God prosper your devout enterprise.<sup>12</sup>

Father Concanen's reply, with its assurance of the sympathy and the support of the highest authority in the Order, not merely imparted added courage to the American priest, and strengthened his determination. It gave an impetus to the enterprise that promised speedy results. Letters now passed from England to

<sup>12</sup> Archives of the Dominican Fathers, Haverstock Hill, London, England.

Rome, and from Rome to England in rapid succession. The greater number of these documents, unfortunately, are no longer extant. But those from the pen of Fenwick that have survived the ravages of time, by showing the purport of the others, afford a fairly complete account of the successive steps in the enterprise that eventually brought the American friar back to the land of his birth.

We shall not, in a work of this character, tire the reader with further lengthy quotations from these letters. The next in order, however, demands a substantial *résumé*. They are all written in a simple, natural and unstudied style which both charms and shows that they came from the heart. Like the one we have largely given, they all reveal a pure, generous soul, incapable of pride or guile, of wrath, envy or malice, of knowingly doing injury to any man. The only defects that the American friar seems to observe are those which he fancies in himself. Yet it were an error to suppose him a weak and indecisive man. He was strong in his convictions. And when convinced that he was in the right, his stand was firm and unyielding; but he maintained his position in the way one gentleman should withstand another.

In reply to the letter from Rome in the preceding November, Father Fenwick writes, January 3, 1804: "With heartfelt sentiments do I accept your kind invitation to correspond directly with your Reverence on the subject in question. And with veneration I embrace the paternal decision of our Vicar General." This decision he regards as an order from heaven; and, owing to his own fancied insufficiency, places his entire trust in God, who often "uses the weak things of this world to confound the strong."

Yet he still craves the advice and the direction of the Superior General and Father Concanen in the difficult undertaking, "the first preparatory steps" towards which he believes "*as well as assured*"; for he has a small house, lands, servants and some funds in the Bank of the United States, belonging to him from his father's estate. But he does not know the value of these. Bishop Carroll of Baltimore wrote him two years ago, not only warmly approving, but urging the plan he now proposes. The provincial has now written him in opposition to his going to America, because of the few subjects in the province; but he has said positively that he would not oppose the project, since it has been referred to the General. Both these letters Fenwick thought had been sent to Rome, as they had been given to Father Plunkett for that purpose.

The next subject that claims attention is the choice of proper co-laborers, a point that is both important and difficult. In this matter, the humble friar has reasons for believing that the General and his assistant will have to use their influence, if not their authority, to obtain permission for the enlistment of such as would be suitable for the American missions, and willing to give their services. He will have no others. Father Charles B. Caestryct, who formerly belonged to the French province, but is now in England, would be a good man for the purpose. So would two Flemish Dominicans whom he knows, Fathers Stordeur and Meerts, both of whom are held in great esteem for their piety, virtues and preaching.

"But, dear Sir, [declares the earnest friar], the *most necessary* man would be Father Wilson, of our Province, now Regent at Bornhem College. His talents and



zeal, I think, would ensure me success, and a *word* directly from the General or you would be cheerfully obeyed by him *now*." His place at Bornheim can be filled by any one of six or seven other fathers. The holy priest then proceeds further to unfold his plans in this wise:

With him [that is, with Father Wilson] I could begin the execution of my plan as soon as I arrive, as I shall write to Bishop Carroll and my brothers to say that I am about coming over, and desire them to have a house, which I have in view, ready to receive me, and to provide me a few scholars. For my design is to begin with a little school by way of a nursery to raise young plants in for the vineyard of the Lord. This has always been my design—to begin with a school, or to execute Bornhem College and Convent in miniature. And I know no Religious more proper for that purpose than the persons I have mentioned, particularly Fathers Wilson and Caestryct. I hope then, dear Sir, you will exert your zeal and influence in procuring me them. An order or a word directly to them would suffice. I know their good-will and readiness.

To raise the money for the transportation of himself and companions across the Atlantic will present a serious difficulty. The voyage will cost some sixty pounds each. Fenwick can "answer for" a hundred pounds, and hopes to be able to get enough on credit to pay the way for himself and one or two others.<sup>13</sup> But, as the undertaking is of a public character and will redound to the honor of the Order, would it be proper to expect the General and the English province to contribute some help?

<sup>13</sup> A letter of Joseph Fenwick, an uncle of the friar and United States consul at Bordeaux, directed to Father Fenwick, London, and dated Paris, July 8, 1804, indicates the source from which the hundred pounds were expected (Archives of Saint Joseph's Province).

The man of God hopes, if he can have any of the fathers mentioned join him in time, to leave England in May at the latest—to sail for Philadelphia, whence he will journey on to Baltimore to present himself to Bishop Carroll. Ever zealous and devoted to the Mother of Christ, he closes his letter with the following request: “I must beg the faculty of his holy Paternity *to institute the Society of the Rosary wherever I go*, in order to obtain the blessing of Heaven and the assistance of our Holy Mother, the Virgin Mary. Be pleased to obtain this power for me.”<sup>14</sup>

The names of Fathers Caestryct, Stordeur and Meerts do not appear again in the existing documents—probably because the reluctance of their superiors to lose such men was so strong that the Superior General did not wish to use his supreme authority in the matter, and the docile Fenwick no longer suggested them. That they did not enlist in the undertaking is the more to be regretted, because, in addition to the good they could have accomplished for the American Church, their Belgian origin might have secured the little band of Friars Preacher a more cordial and charitable reception than was accorded them on their arrival in Kentucky, and thus made their way smoother.

However, the Most Rev. Joseph Gaddi, Superior General of the Order at the time, through his assistant, authorized Father Wilson to join in the over-seas enterprise. But by this time, as other members of his province had begun to show a disposition to offer their services for the same cause, the English provincial, quite naturally, became alarmed at the prospect of losing so

<sup>14</sup> Fenwick Carshalton, England, to Concanen, Rome, January 3, 1804 (Archives of the Dominican Master General, Rome, Codex XIII, 731).

many valuable men. What in more prosperous days would have been welcomed as an honor and as a means of spreading the Gospel of Christ, was then a peril to the existence of the Order in Britain. Accordingly, Father Plunkett set himself strongly against the enrollment of any of his subjects in the American project, declining to permit even Fenwick to depart without a formal order directly from the General.

Here we find a strength of character that surprises us in so humble a man, and a charity that edifies. In none of Fenwick's letters is there to be found an unkind or criticizing word. But now that he felt that he was in the right, and had the word of the General that nullified the authority of his provincial, he wrote:

I am therefore still in suspense, and wait such an order. But rely on it, my dear Sir, I shall not desist from the enterprise. "Dixi: Nunc coepi" [I have said: Now have I begun]. I expect to meet with great difficulties and trials, but trust that He who gives the *will*, also supplies the means. I know that "qui perseveraverit usque in finem, hic salvus erit" [he that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved]. It is in vain to expect Mr. Underhill will allow Father Wilson to accompany me, unless the General speaks [directly]. No wonder! since he makes so much difficulty about me, a young, illiterate and inexperienced person, whereas Father Wilson is a man of great merit, experience and universal esteem, though young also. I sincerely thank you, dear Sir, for the zealous interest you take in this important and meritorious affair. I trust your zealous and generous sentiments and efforts will be crowned with success and consolation.

To balance the holy man's disappointment there came other offers of enlistment in the new work. One was from Father Robert A. Angier of Bornheim, of whom Fenwick says that he is "a worthy Religious, a good

scholar, [and] a young man, i. e., a little older than myself," and expresses "an ardent desire of sharing the labor and merit with me." The other was Father Tosi, a master of novices at the Minerva, Rome, who made his proffer through Doctor Concanen. In the course of the same document (letter of April 14, 1804), we find one of the leading reasons back of the English fathers' desire to enlist in the American cause. The successive steps in the re-organization of the Church in the countries then under the sway of Napoleon Bonaparte had gradually led to the absolution of religious from all obedience to the superiors of their respective orders, and placed them under the jurisdiction of the ordinaries. Thus Father Wilson, who was vicar provincial in Belgium and rector at Bornheim, was no longer subject to his English provincial; nor had he any authority over the members of his community. The fathers there were neither fish nor flesh. This position, so anomalous as to be almost intolerable, turned the minds of more than one of them towards Fenwick's new field of labor.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> — Fenwick to Concanen, April 14, 1804 (Archives of the Dominican Master General, *ut supra*); Rev. S. T. Wilson to same, Georgetown, D. C., October 14, 1805 (*ibid.*).—Cardinal Caprara's famous decree of secularization, *De Expresso Mandato et Auctoritate Sanctissimi*, may be seen in VERMEERSCH (A.), *De Religiosis Institutis et Personis* (Bruges, 1904), II, 466.

In the letter referred to above, Father Wilson tells Father Concanen: "Ever since the notice I received from our Archbishop, Monsr. Roquelaure, that all religious in France, being now secularized by His Holiness, were entirely under his jurisdiction, I have turned my thoughts to America, where a new prospect opens of labouring with success." How different this reason for the noted friar's coming to America from that given by Maes in his life of Father Charles Nerinckx, pp. 171-72! Having spoken of the trials undergone by the English Dominicans, that author proceeds to say: "Not knowing what to do, Father Wilson, then President of the College, cultivated the friendship of some of the Republican officials, and even consented to take their sons as students of the institution, in the hope of saving it. By dint of concessions, he held out against the tide of oppression, until 1805, when his conscience told him that he could stretch condescension no further; and he had to wander again, until, under the leadership of Father Fenwick, he and his brethren emigrated to America. . . ."



For the reasons given, Father Fenwick's departure for his future field of action had been retarded. To prevent possible delays in putting his plan into execution, once he was in America, he devoted the remainder of his time in England largely to preparing ways and means for the proposed institution. In this connection, he suggests in the letter of which we have been speaking, that the Italian recruit borrow means and begin his long voyage at once. The money obtained for the purpose, he says, will be refunded as soon as he himself reaches his destination. In Maryland, Father Tosi could "go to Bishop Carroll; he will be received with open arms and provided for till we meet. When there, he will soon find out my Uncle John Fenwick, a worthy confrère of the Order and missionary, likewise my brothers, who are all settled in life, and will make their homes his."

What letters passed between Rome and England in the meantime cannot now be known. But the next document, dated August 29, 1804, shows that the Superior General decided in Father Fenwick's favor. For he writes: "I have at length the satisfaction to inform his holy Paternity and yourself that all measures are concerted and decided upon for my departure to America, fixed for the tenth of next month. Rev. Father Provincial Underhill has at last consented, tho' reluctantly, I fear, and allows me a few vestments and two chalices from the Province."

But the good priest could obtain no money, for the reason that the losses sustained through the French Revolution and the defalcation of its funds in the Bank of Vienna had brought the British province to straits. He has engaged, at a cost of fifty guineas each, passage for himself and Father Angier on a ship bound for Nor-

folk, Virginia.<sup>16</sup> Father Wilson, owing to financial difficulties at Bornheim, cannot go for the present. "Good Father Tuite" of Bornheim now offers his services and is anxious for the General to send him permission at the earliest convenience, that he may accompany Father Wilson. In this connection, the leader of the little band of missionaries takes occasion to disclose his wishes in regard to his last named confrère.

My intention [he writes] was, and which I still persevere in, to request our holy Vicar General to nominate Father Wilson the Prior or head of our Colony or Community from the moment of his arrival with us, as he is [in] every way adequate to the task and the only one of us three [that is, of those who had already received permission to go to the United States] capable of directing or governing either in or out of a community. With him alone I should not despair of success; without him I know not what I shall do—nay, am inclined to despond, and have all reason to think I shall fail in my undertaking. He is not old, is hearty, zealous, charitable and indefatigable; which, added to his knowledge and experience, render him indispensably necessary to me. Therefore, my dear Father Master, you will, I trust, use all your zeal and influence to hasten his departure. He wants not zeal and charity for the undertaking, but advice and encouragement. He has pledged his word to me: I can rely upon it.

That they might have a guide and director to follow, the little band of four priests chose Father Fenwick for their superior, until, as he expresses it, "we can choose, or have nominated by the General a more proper one. This [he declares] I consented to merely to obviate difficulties and hasten the execution of our plan." Continuing, he says: "I beg then you will submit what I say of Father Wilson to the Vicar General and for-

<sup>16</sup> The value of the English pound at that date seems to have been about three dollars and eighty-five cents. Yet even this shows how expensive was a voyage across the Atlantic in the distant past.

ward to me to the care of Doctor Carroll his instructions and orders, with every necessary paper for the establishment of a Convent and College for the education of youth."

But now we see the zealous servant of Christ extending still further his efforts for the good of the American Church. Like the fathers, the English Dominican Sisters, long established in Brussels, had been compelled to flee before the mad onrush of the French revolutionary armies. Owing to the anti-Catholic prejudices then prevailing in England, they had not prospered in the mother-country. The gloomy aspect of things caused them to approach Father Fenwick on the subject of following him to the United States. The holy man began to take up their cause also with Doctor Concanen. But as he was now on the eve of his departure, and had not time to prosecute the case, the project did not crystallize.<sup>17</sup>

In the meantime, on the advice of the Right Rev. John Douglass, titular bishop of Centuria and vicar apostolic of the London District, and other friends, Father Fenwick appealed to the charity of the Catholics of England for aid in his pious undertaking. In the photographic copy of his circular letter before us, he tells how he had entered the Order of Saint Dominic with the express design of establishing it and a religious seminary in his native land, that his brethren might carry the blessings of religion throughout the vast extent of the country; how the troubles incident to the French Revolution had long delayed his plans; how his superiors both at Rome and at home now give him their

<sup>17</sup> Fenwick, Carshalton, England, to Concanen, Rome, August 29, 1804 (Archives of the Dominican Master General, Rome, Codex XIII, 731).

heartiest encouragement; how some of his brethren—among them Fathers Wilson, Angier and Tosi—have engaged their services for the enterprise; and how Bishop Douglass not merely endorses the project, but presses its execution and urges his people to contribute towards its realization, because it is only from such foundations that the Church of the day can hope for an adequate supply of laborers in the Lord's vineyard. Nor did that good ordinary stop at this. To insure the success of his friend, he gave him the following note of formal approval to be annexed to his circular letter.

We John Douglass, Bishop of Centuria, and Vicar Apostolic of the London District, knowing well the merits of Father Dominick Fenwick, and approving highly of the said Father's zeal in devoting his paternal estate, and using personal exertion to bless his native land with the learning, piety and virtues for which the holy Order of Saint Dominic has been, through every age from its foundation, most eminently distinguished, beg leave to recommend the above Address to the attention of the Nobility, Gentry, and other members of the Catholic Church, and to solicit their charitable contributions in aid of a work, that has for its object the propagation of the Catholic Faith and the salvation of souls in that extensive country.

JOHN CENTURIENSIS.<sup>18</sup>

The response to Father Fenwick's appeal was quick and generous, for through it he soon realized a hundred pounds. And this sum, together with another of equal amount which he had already secured, nearly sufficed for the transportation of himself and colleagues to their future field of labor. It is not surprising, therefore, to see the rejoiced priest, September 1, 1804, writing in a

<sup>18</sup> An original copy of Father Fenwick's letter of appeal to the English Catholics is in the Archives of the Dominican Master General, Rome, Codex XIII, 731.



tone of spiritual glee and gratitude what we may term his note of farewell to Doctor Concanen from England. One can almost feel the joy with which he penned the words: "Father Antoninus Angier goes with me, and Father Wilson will follow as soon as he is disengaged from Bornhem." With no less confidence does he count on the hearty co-operation of his uncle, Rev. John Fenwick, who is already a missionary in Maryland.<sup>19</sup>

For many reasons have we given these transactions in some minuteness of detail. They throw much light on the subject of these pages; they cannot fail to be of interest to those desirous of knowing more of the saintly bishop, and of the history of the Dominicans in the United States, whose father he is; they form a not unimportant link in the chain of the annals of the American Church—especially of that part comprised in the states of Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee; they mark the beginning of fruitful and zealous labors of which all too little is known by our reading public; they will also edify the spiritual-minded among Catholics.

Indeed, it is rare to find, even among men of eminent holiness and sanctity, a difference of opinion with so much at stake as was the case in that between Fathers Plunkett, the English provincial, and Fenwick, where all edifies, and nothing comes from the pen or escapes the lips to mortify or to shock us. The two friars must live in history as models of religious zeal, charity and obedience. The one strove to preserve his Order in his native Britain for the benefit of the Church there. The other sought to plant his institute in the land of his birth, that religion might profit by its labors in the new republic. The case was laid before the Superior Gen-

<sup>19</sup> Fenwick, London, to Concanen, Rome, September 1, 1805 (Archives of the Dominican Master General, Rome, Codex XIII, 731).

eral, who, in view of what he believed to be the greater good of a larger part of the world, decided in favor of the American priest. While the matter was under discussion, in all things and without a murmur or a complaint, did Father Fenwick submit to the will of his immediate superior, using only his right of recourse to Rome. In a no less edifying spirit of obedience did Father Plunkett bow to the voice of a higher authority, when it had spoken.

## CHAPTER IV

### FUTURE FIELD OF LABOR

THE story of Kentucky, with the fascinating legends of its battlefields and hunting-grounds of the aboriginal American, and the traditions of its daring explorer, Daniel Boone, its bold, hardy pioneer hunters, and its brave, picturesque backwoodsmen, never lacks interest. Indeed, the early annals of few of our states so abound in dim luster, or are so rich in a charm that is ever old, still always new. Yet, as the history of the state has not only been often told, in book and sketch, but narrated in a style and manner most pleasing, it has been judged better not to attempt, in a work of this character, the repetition of a tale with which every American reader is familiar. Suffice it, then, to give here merely an outline of the state's Catholic history up to the time when it falls into the life of the subject of this narrative.

Probably the first white men to set foot on Kentucky's soil were the French in Louis Joliet's voyage of exploration down the Mississippi River in 1673. With them was the celebrated Jesuit missionary, Father James Marquette. By some they are said to have landed at the juncture of the Ohio and the Mississippi, where they visited the Shawnee Indians, who had been driven from their more northern and eastern haunts by the warlike Iroquois. It is likely, too, that this mild tribe of aborigines was visited by Father James Gravier

on a similar voyage in 1700.<sup>1</sup> But from that time until more than fifty years later rarely, if ever, was the solemn silence of Kentucky's unbroken forest disturbed by the tread of human feet other than those of the red man.

The second half of the eighteenth century, however, was not far spent, when adventurous hunters, fur traders and surveyors occasionally made their way over the blue Alleghanies, and descended the streams along their westward course. Gradually they penetrated into what is now central Kentucky. Such names as Mooney and Fitzpatrick show the presence of the ubiquitous Irishman among these early adventurers, who were nearly all from Virginia and the Carolinas. Following these, and perhaps attracted by the tales they brought home of the beauty, fertility and climate of the country, pioneer settlers from the same states and from Maryland soon began to set up their tents in the home of the bluegrass. Never, perhaps, was there a people of a more daring and fearless spirit than the first white inhabitants of Kentucky. They had need of all their courage. Regarded as enemies and intruders by the roving bands of Indians that traversed the country in every direction, they lived from day to day with their lives in their hands. These dangers were abated in 1782, when General George R. Clark finally succeeded in wresting the northwest from the English and their Indian allies. But not until General Anthony Wayne's historic victory over the Miamis, in August, 1794, and the treaty of Greenville in the following year, could the backwoods-

<sup>1</sup> WEBB, *The Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky*, pp. 13-14. But Shea (*History of the Catholic Church in Colonial Days*, p. 314) does not think that Marquette landed at the mouth of the Ohio. Collins (*A History of Kentucky*, I, 510) thinks it probable that Robert de la Salle touched the western part of Kentucky in 1680.



man of Kentucky feel that he was free from all peril at the hands of roving bands of savages lurking in the forests.

Emigration to Kentucky, properly speaking, began in 1774. Among the earliest emigrants there were adherents of the faith professed by Lord Baltimore's original colony. But the first Catholics of whom we have any definite record, as such, were Doctor George Hart, William Coomes and family and, perhaps, Abraham and Isaac Hite. They moved westward at the date just mentioned, or the year following. Coomes was born in Maryland, but emigrated from Virginia. Hart was born in Ireland, and emigrated from Maryland. He was possibly Kentucky's first physician, as Mrs. Coomes was likely the state's first school-teacher. But while, as the Honorable Ben. Webb suggests, there were doubtless members of the same religion in the steady stream of home-seekers to Kentucky during the ten years that succeeded the above date, the real Catholic emigration began in 1785.<sup>2</sup> In the beginning, nearly all of these were from Maryland, and principally from Saint Mary's, Charles and Prince George's counties. Yet, other parts of the former Baltimore Colony contributed not inconsiderably towards Kentucky's early Catholic population. We learn, for instance, that Saint Mary's congregation, Hagerstown, which had been a central point from which other stations in northwestern Maryland and southern Pennsylvania were attended, became so depleted of its wealthier members, through emigration to the west, that it was recommended, in 1796, to make it a mission of Emmitsburg. In fact, few of the

<sup>2</sup> WEBB, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

faith, other than those who were unable to move to Kentucky, remained in the parish.<sup>3</sup>

That so many were induced to leave a soil so productive as that round about Hagerstown, shows how exaggerated must have been the reports of the wealth that awaited all who should go to Kentucky. Rumor, in fact, represented the new country as a veritable agricultural El Dorado. As Bishop Spalding prettily expresses it:

The reports carried back to Virginia and Maryland by the first adventurers who had visited Kentucky, were of so glowing a character as to stimulate many others to emigrate thither. The new country was represented as a sort of promised land, with exuberant and fertile soil; and if not flowing with milk and honey, at least teeming with all kinds of game. This rich country now lay open to the enterprising activity of the white man; its fertile lands could be obtained by occupation, or purchased for a mere trifle; and the emigrants might subsist, like the Indians, by hunting, until the soil could be prepared for cultivation.<sup>4</sup>

It was but natural, therefore, that many of the people in the neighboring eastern states should look with wistful eyes towards the wonderful country newly discovered in the west. So it was with the Catholics in Saint Mary's, Charles and Prince George's counties, Maryland, where much of the land, through long unscientific cultivation, had become impoverished. Accordingly, in 1785, the heads of sixty Catholic families in these three counties, but mostly residents of Saint Mary's, formed a league, and pledged themselves to move to Kentucky as circumstances permitted. They were aware of the dangers they would have to encounter from the Indians,

<sup>3</sup> Rev. Francis Bodkin, Hagerstown, Maryland, to Bishop Carroll, Baltimore, July 5, 1796 (Baltimore Archives, Case 1, T 5).

<sup>4</sup> SPALDING, *Sketches of the Early Catholic Missions in Kentucky*, p. 22.

not on the way to this El Dorado only, but even after they had settled in their new homes. With the tales of the beauty and productiveness of Kentucky were interspersed those of the horrors committed by the red men. But that was America's age of chivalry. Such stories could not chill the growing spirit of adventure in the brave hearts that had just thrown off the yoke of the mother country.

Yet, on the one hand, Maryland's past history had taught her sturdy Catholic pioneers that prudence is the better part of valor. On the other hand, like their forefathers who had sacrificed so much for conscience' sake, they treasured their faith above every earthly possession. Thus the league of which we have spoken, had a twofold purpose. Settling in the same locality, in addition to serving as a protection against Indian marauders, would secure to them the consolations of their religion. Nor can there be any doubt that Father John Carroll encouraged such a scheme of colonization, and promised the league to send a priest along with them, or to procure a pastor for their souls with the least possible delay. This zealous man was then vicar apostolic of the entire United States, and was naturally anxious to build up the Church throughout the extensive country under his spiritual jurisdiction. In the association were not only many of his friends, but some of his near relations.

Twenty-five of the sixty families mentioned above left Maryland and reached their destination during the same year in which the league was formed. The remainder followed in 1786, 1787 and 1788. In the meantime, other homeseekers joined in with these, swelling the procession to enormous proportions. As Spalding expresses it again: "Men and women, young and old,

caught up this spirit; and soon nearly half of Virginia and Maryland was in motion for the west."<sup>5</sup> This was particularly the case after the cessation of danger that came with the Indian treaty of 1795. Prior to that date, as the banks of the Ohio nearer the present Louisville were infested by hostile tribes, the more ordinary route to "the land of promise" was overland to Pittsburgh, and thence down the Ohio in flatboats to Maysville. From Maysville the pilgrims made their way through the forests to the lands they had secured.

So travelled the first five and twenty of the sixty families of which we have spoken. They must have been keenly disappointed on reaching their future homes on Pottinger's Creek, for they were not slow to discover that the land they had purchased was perhaps the poorest in central Kentucky. They had been deceived, tradition tells us, by land speculators who had obtained large areas in the present state, and sold this part of them to the unsuspecting colonists by misrepresentation. Be this as it may, it was now too late to remedy the error. A part of the purchase money had been paid, and bonds given for the rest.<sup>6</sup> Nor had many of the unfortunate victims, thus deprived of their means, any option but to settle where they had bought. And in this connection, we have an example of the sacrifices on the part of Catholics for the sake of their souls, which have often edified historians. Though the soil in this locality was the poorest, and the situation most uninviting, many Catholic adventurers continued to take up homes in the same neighborhood. The foundations of a large colony, composed of those of the faith had been laid, and thither they went, in spite of all temporal disadvantages, to

<sup>5</sup> SPALDING, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> WEBB, *op. cit.*, p. 32.



secure for themselves and their children the consolations of their religion.<sup>7</sup>

Most of the subsequent Catholic colonists, however, more wise in worldly prudence, chose other sections of the state for their future abodes. But, with few exceptions, wherever they settled, they purchased neighboring tracts of land, with the same view in mind that had inspired the league in Maryland and brought so many together on Pottinger's Creek. This proto-Catholic settlement in Kentucky was followed in quick succession by others. The colony of Hardin's Creek, for example, and probably that on Elkhorn Creek (in what is now Scott County) began in the following year, 1786. The settlement on Cartwright's Creek and that near Bardstown had begun before the close of 1787. Then came that on the Rolling Fork in 1788. The colony near Hardinsburg, the present Breckinridge County, dates from 1790. Both 1792 and 1795 are given as the date of the birth of the Cox's Creek or Fairfield Settlement.<sup>8</sup>

For some years, these eight localities comprised nearly the entire Catholic population of Kentucky, which Father Badin estimated at some three hundred families as early as 1793. As immigration into the new country ceased not, they all continued to grow; but the settlement known as that of Cartwright's Creek, in which the subject of this narrative was to make his future home, soon surpassed the others both in numbers and in collective wealth. Besides these colonies, smaller settlements of Catholics and individual families of the faith were scattered here and there in widely separated places. Many of these latter or their descendants, unfortunately, owing to their isolated situations, their environ-

<sup>7</sup> SPALDING, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>8</sup> SPALDING and WEBB, *passim*.

ments, un-Catholic influences, and the impossibility of receiving proper religious instruction from the few missionaries then in the state, fell away from the Church. By the date of Father Edward Dominic Fenwick's arrival in that part of the Lord's vineyard, the Catholic population ran into the thousands.

But it is now time to turn our attention to Kentucky's early missionaries. As has been seen, one of the prime purposes that inspired the league of sixty Maryland families was to secure the services of a pastor for their souls, and to make his ministry both easier and more effectual after his arrival in the west. But the scarcity of priests and the multiplicity of pastoral labors in the east made it impossible for the zealous vicar apostolic to send a missionary to that remote part of his vicariate. In this way, two years lapsed before the Catholics who went to Kentucky first, had the happiness of welcoming an ambassador of Christ to their midst. This was Father Charles Whelan, a zealous and humble Franciscan friar, who had formerly labored in New York, and began the first Catholic church erected in that metropolis. Father Whelan arrived in Kentucky during the year 1787. The day of his coming must have been the occasion of keen joy for the colonists, whose situation was the more desolate because so long deprived of the succor of their religion.

We have no satisfactory record of this missionary's work in the west. But one can imagine that his labors were heavy, and his ministry beset with many hardships and inconveniences. The people had become unaccustomed to frequent the sacraments. The young were probably not well instructed in their duties. Many, through living in the forest wilds and being long de-

prived of a pastor's guidance, had grown headstrong and fallen into habits incompatible with Christian piety. Difficulties soon crossed the good missionary's path. He had no priestly companion with whom to consult, or to administer the waters of grace to his own soul all the while he was overburdened with ministering to those of the multitudes. He knew no rest. His incessant travels did not permit him to erect even a rude house of prayer. Having no home of his own, he was obliged to lodge with the families of the faithful in their humble log cabins. His life was lonely, and age had begun to tell on his frame. All these things bore heavily upon God's minister, and unfortunately caused him to leave the mission early in the spring of 1790, after a residence of little more than two years.<sup>9</sup>

In the summer of the same year (1790), the Rev. William de Rohan, whom Doctor John G. Shea, in his life of Archbishop Carroll, more than once erroneously calls a Dominican, arrived in Kentucky with immigrants from east Tennessee and North Carolina. Like his predecessor, Father de Rohan was of Irish parentage; but he had been educated, if not born, in France. Before the close of the year, he built the first Catholic church in the state. It was erected in the Pottinger's Creek Settlement, was a small structure of logs covered with clapboards, and was later dedicated to divine service under the title of Holy Cross. But Father de Rohan did not long continue his active ministry among the people after the erection of the little church.<sup>10</sup>

The Catholic settlements of Kentucky were then left to suffer from spiritual hunger and thirst for more than three years. The appeals of the people for a priest

<sup>9</sup> SPALDING, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-46; WEBB, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-57.

<sup>10</sup> SPALDING, *op. cit.*, p. 49; WEBB, *op. cit.*, pp. 26, 70, 158-59.

must have torn the heart of the newly consecrated Bishop Carroll. But, owing to the cause of which we have spoken, he was unable to grant their petitions. On May 25, 1793, however, he ordained Rev. Stephen Theodore Badin, the first man raised to the priesthood in the United States, and destined to become the apostle of Catholicity in Kentucky. The clergymen had now increased in numbers. Accordingly, on the sixth day of the following September, we see the young priest, though the oils of consecration were hardly dry on his hands, starting on his journey for the distant and hard missions of the west, under the leadership of Rev. Peter Barrière as vicar general. Following the route of least danger, the two travellers took the boat at Pittsburgh. On the way down the Ohio, they halted a few days at Gallipolis to visit the remnants of the former French colony at that place. At Maysville, they left their boat and trudged overland to Lexington, where they arrived just in time for Father Badin to say mass on the first Sunday of Advent, which fell that year on the first day of December.<sup>11</sup>

With Father Badin this mass, which was his first in the state, marked the beginning of an apostolate in Kentucky that was to extend over a period of more than a quarter of a century. But Father Barrière, soon tiring of the hardships and the loneliness of the backwoods, left the missions for New Orleans in the April of the ensuing year (1794). Thus did the young priest, not yet a year ordained, have the burden of all the settlements thrown upon his shoulders. Perhaps not in the history of the Church has so youthful a clergyman (he

<sup>11</sup> BADIN, *Origine et Progrès de la Mission du Kentucky*, pp. 2 ff.; SPALDING and WEBB, *passim*.—The reader is also referred to the same authors for the other facts given in this chapter regarding Father Badin.



was but five and twenty years of age) ever been entrusted with a charge more responsible and more trying, or placed in a situation more solitary and forlorn.

To attempt anything like a detailed account of the zealous young Frenchman's tremendous labors would carry this chapter to an unwarrantable length. Suffice it to say that the places he was obliged to attend extended, from east to west, over a distance of some one hundred and thirty miles and, from north to south, perhaps seventy miles. The reader may imagine what exertions so extensive a pastoral charge exacted that the various stations might be regularly visited, confessions heard, instructions given, and the faith kept alive in the hearts of the people. With all this and the frequent sick calls, near and far, Father Badin may be said to have practically lived on horseback. Fortunately, nature had given him that national characteristic, so often remarked even in those who at home were accustomed to the luxuries of life, which enables the French missionary to be cheerful and content alike in desert solitude, gloomy forest or the hut of the savage. So also was he blessed with an iron constitution that nothing could break, and a nervous energy that never tired. The wonder is, not that he did not accomplish more, but that he accomplished so much.<sup>12</sup>

February 26, 1797, the lonely pastor and his scattered flocks were gladdened by the arrival of Rev. Michael J. Fournier, an affable and zealous French missionary. Two years later, January 31, 1799, their joy was increased by the coming of Father Anthony Salmon. He was followed, a few days later, by Father

<sup>12</sup> Father Badin's many letters in the Baltimore diocesan archives bear testimony that he did not spare himself.

John Thayer.<sup>13</sup> Salmon and Fournier had been fellow-students and brother priests in the diocese of Blois, France, before the days of the French Revolution. Thayer had been a non-Catholic minister in Massachusetts, but had been converted and ordained abroad. Kentucky was now blessed with more ambassadors of Christ than had ever been, at one time, within the borders of the state. All promised well for the missions. And one may well believe that the joy of the patriarch of the American Church, Bishop Carroll, at the bright prospects of this distant part of his diocese was not less keen than that of the people and the missionaries; for the good prelate ever showed a special affection for Kentucky.

After a twelvemonth's sojourn with Father Badin at Saint Stephen's, the pastoral residence that the veteran missionary had built for himself near where stands the present Loretto Academy, Father Fournier took up his abode on the Rolling Fork. Father Salmon succeeded him at Saint Stephen's, and Father Thayer was placed in Scott County. All had several charges under their care.

But death came all too soon to thin the clerical ranks in the promising Church of the west. November 9, 1799, Father Salmon was thrown from his horse, receiving an injury from which he died the next day. He had not labored on the missions quite ten months. Four years later, February 12, 1803, Father Fournier also passed to his eternal reward; and his death, although it was occasioned by an accident in a sawmill, Father

<sup>13</sup> — Father Fournier, Kentucky, to Bishop Carroll, March 2, 1797 (Baltimore Archives, Case 8 A, M 1); Father Salmon to same, Kentucky, May 27, 1799 (*ibid.*, Case 8 B, G 5); Father Badin to same, February 20, 1799 (*ibid.*, Case 1, E 12).

Badin says, "was chiefly caused by his excessive labours and long rides."<sup>14</sup> Prior to this, Father Thayer had retired from his ministrations, later returning to the east, and thence went to Ireland. The deaths of Fathers Salmon and Fournier were extremely unfortunate. Not only did their zeal bring souls to Christ; their affable manners and gentle dispositions, in addition to winning the hearts and the confidence of the people, tended to soften the harsh ways, the caustic language, and the extreme severity of Father Badin that caused him rather to be disliked than loved, and often prevented the accomplishment of the good which he sought to do. His ways often laid open gaping wounds for which theirs served as healing balm.

Thus was Father Badin again left alone for more than two years on the missions of Kentucky. Again was he obliged not merely to repeat the extraordinary labors of which we have spoken, but to redouble his energies and his exertions. The missions had both grown and multiplied; the distances he had to travel were lengthened; the sick calls were increased; the scattered Catholics had become more numerous. The good priest's cares were without end. Perhaps few of the missionaries in the country at that time could have faced so much in so solitary a situation.

The appeals of both the lonely missionary and the suffering people, found in the letters sent from Kentucky to Baltimore during this time, and the money forwarded to Bishop Carroll to pay the travelling expenses for a priest, or priests, from the east to the west, show that no efforts were spared to secure aid for that desolate Church. Often rumors or promises of assistance

<sup>14</sup> Father Badin to Bishop Carroll, April 11, 1803 (Baltimore Archives, Case A Special, L 12).

raised hopes that were destined to be disappointed. At one time interest was centered in a plan to form an establishment of Franciscan Fathers in Scott County under the leadership of Father Michael Egan, later the first bishop of Philadelphia.<sup>15</sup> And in the late summer of 1804, Father Badin was cheered by a visit from Rev. Urban Guillet, the head of a band of Trappists exiled from France by the revolution, but then located at Pigeon Hills, Adams County, Pennsylvania. The purpose of Father Urban's visit was to make preparations to remove his community to Kentucky. Although the veteran missionary was much pleased with this plan, he felt that, as the Trappist life was wholly contemplative, the presence of such a community would rather offer him a place of retreat than lighten his toils or aid in distributing the bread of life to the Church of the west.<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps the following list of churches and stations (with prospects of having chapels in the near future) represents the principal places that claimed Father Badin's attention at the close of the period of which this chapter treats. Their names, locations and respective distances from Saint Stephen's, the missionary's residence, will not be out of place. Apart from the interest that attaches to them as early centers of Catholic activity west of the Alleghanies, they show the immense labors which Father Badin was obliged to undergo, give a fair idea of the growth of the Church in Kentucky, and complete the historical setting for its entrance into the life of Father Edward Dominic Fenwick, whose labors there prepared him to become the apostle of Ohio:

<sup>15</sup> *American Catholic Historical Researches*, IX, 75-76; Father Badin to Bishop Carroll, December 6, 1804 (Baltimore Archives, Case A Special, L 11).

<sup>16</sup> Badin to Carroll, as in preceding note; and September 7, 1804 (*ibid.*, Case A Special, L 10).



1. Saint Stephen's, then in Washington, but now in Marion County. Although this was Father Badin's home, mass was also celebrated there for the faithful.

2. Holy Cross, in the Pottinger's Creek Settlement, then also in Washington, but now in Marion County. This church was built in 1790, and was about four miles west of Saint Stephen's.

3. Saint Francis', Scott County, built in 1796 or 1797, and seventy-two miles northeast.

4. Saint Ann's, in the Cartwright's Creek Settlement, Washington County, built in 1797 or 1798—about seven miles east.

5. Saint Joseph's, Bardstown, Nelson County, built in 1798—thirteen miles north.

6. Holy Mary's in the Rolling Fork Settlement, Marion County (but then in Washington)—thirteen miles southeast. The church there was under way.

7. Saint Thomas', "in Poplar Neck," Nelson County, eleven miles north.

8. Saint Charles', Washington County (now in Marion County), eight miles southeast.

9. Saint Michael's, in the Cox's Creek Settlement (now Fairfield), Nelson County, twenty-four miles to the north. Preparations for a church there seem to have been under way.

10. Saint Clare's (near the present Colesburg), Hardin County, twenty-four miles to the northwest.

11. Saint Benedict's, Shelby County, thirty-five or forty miles north.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> The location of Saint Benedict's has been in doubt. But Badin's list and a letter from him to Bishop Carroll, dated: "St. Benedict's, Shelby County, May 12, 1808" (Baltimore Archives, Case 1, I 7), settle the point. The distance of the place from Saint Stephen's, as given in the life of Father Nerinckx by Maes (page 126), was thirty-three miles. But Father Badin, in a letter to Bishop Carroll, October 5, 1805 (Baltimore Archives,

12. Saint Anthony's, "near the Forks of Rough Creek," Breckinridge County, eighty miles to the west. It is now the parish of Axtel.

13. Saint Christopher's, "near the Kentucky River," Madison County, eighty miles east by north.

14. Saint Louis', in the present city of Louisville, which was more than fifty miles to the north.

15. Saint Peter's, in Lexington, seventy miles to the northeast.

16. Saint Bernard's, Adair County, thirty-four miles to the southeast. The church for this congregation was subsequently built in Casey County, where now stands the village of Clementsville.

17. Saint Patrick's, Danville, Mercer County (now in Boyle County)—thirty miles to the east.

18. Saint John's, Bullitt County. This church was a building, and was twenty-five or thirty miles northwest of Saint Stephen's. It was likely located in the neighborhood of the present Chapeze.<sup>18</sup>

19. Springfield, Washington County, nine or ten miles to the east.<sup>19</sup>

But to this list of places might have been added—evidently it was forgotten by the busy missionary—a little colony of Catholics in and around Harrodsburg, Mercer County. These people were thirty-five or forty miles northeast of Father Badin's home.

Case 1, G 10), says that it was about forty miles from his home. A communication to the *United States Catholic Miscellany* of December 16, 1826, shows that this Catholic settlement was in that part of Shelby County which was taken (1824) to aid in forming the present county of Spencer.

<sup>18</sup> Maes (*op. cit.*, p. 127) makes Father Nerinckx say that this proposed church was only fifteen miles from Saint Stephen's. But this is evidently a typographical or other error.

<sup>19</sup> The above list is taken from one sent to Bishop Carroll by Father Badin, March 14, 1807 (Baltimore Archives, Case C Special, L).—Maes' life of Nerinckx, pp. 126–27, was used for the distances of the various missions from Saint Stephen's.

Writing to Bishop Carroll, August 31, 1803, Father Badin tells his ordinary that: "Having made a new census of the different parishes, I find the number of Catholics amounts to upwards of seven hundred families."<sup>20</sup> Nearly four years later, March 14, 1807, (in the list of missions we have just given), he says that he has counted nine hundred and seventy-two Catholic families in the state. But owing to the wide territory over which the faithful were scattered, the busy lives of the priests, and the difficulty of making a correct census at that period, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the Catholic households were much in excess of these two estimates. Including slaves and unmarried whites of the laboring class, there must have been in Kentucky at least seven or eight thousand persons belonging to the fold at the time Father Fenwick founded there the first house of Friars Preacher in the United States.

Fabulous rumors of the new state's wealth were still afloat. For this reason, although the great tide of immigration was soon to be turned to the north and the northwest, many Catholics continued to flock to Kentucky, not only from Maryland, but from other parts of the country, and even from Ireland. The future of the Church there must have appeared gloomy to its solitary apostle. More than once, in his letters, does he tell his ordinary of his trials in attending his widely scattered flocks, of how rarely he can visit some of the more distant missions, of how often the people thus die without the sacraments. These touching letters, and the appeals of the people for spiritual guides, there can be no doubt, determined Bishop Carroll to persuade Father Fenwick, now that it was known he would soon return

<sup>20</sup> Baltimore Archives, Case A Special, L 1.

to America, to establish his Order in the land of his birth, to make Kentucky the field of action for himself and his confrères. Doubtless also, the complaints that had gone to Baltimore against Father Badin's undue severity and brusque treatment of the faithful, together with the difficulty of finding clergymen willing to go to that remote portion of his charge, had a part in bringing the anxious prelate to such a conclusion. He felt that the American friar and his English associates would understand the people better, and be better understood by them than those with a foreign mother-tongue. Accordingly, the bishop communicated his intention to Father Badin. And the missionary, referring to the proposal in his next letter, writes:

I am very anxious of seeing the venerable Trappists established in this country; and if they will in some measure (not offensive to their institution) modify their plan of educating youth, which partakes less of the monkish tincture and more of the literary taste, they shall certainly be viewed in this country with admiration, will promote much the general interests of Religion, and more efficaciously the particular success of their order. I am happy to hear of the Dominicans' coming shortly to this State, whose exterior ministry will be felt more sensibly to be beneficial.<sup>21</sup>

Writing again, two months later, Father Badin tells his bishop that the people of Madison County have subscribed a nice sum for a chapel. Besides, he says: "they wish to erect or encourage an Academy there. The place would probably suit the Rev. Mr. Fenwick and his brethren; unless they prefer Bardstown, which is the most central town of the Catholic settlements."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Badin to Carroll, as in note 15.

<sup>22</sup> Same to same, February 26, 1805 (Baltimore Archives, Case A Special, L 9).



With these quotations showing the hearty welcome which the lonely missionary of Kentucky intended giving the American friar on his arrival in the west, we can close this chapter. Although somewhat lengthy, it is necessary in order to give the reader a proper conspectus of one of the most important periods in Father Fenwick's life.

## CHAPTER V

### RETURNS TO AMERICA

FATHER EDWARD D. FENWICK'S humility, profound though it was, did not dull his spirit of initiative or lessen his activity. As soon, therefore, as he received from Rome assurances of the Father General's sympathy and support of the over-seas enterprise, he wrote to the patriarch of the American hierarchy to inform him of the promising outlook.

The long conceived project [he says] of endeavouring to found an establishment, under your Lordship's patronage, for the education of youth, etc., I now regard as the will of heaven, since it is approved and much recommended to me by our General at Rome. I have the honor, therefore, to inform your Lordship that agreeably to my Superior's will and order, I shall embark as soon as I have made the necessary arrangements; which [I] suppose will be in May or June. When arrived, my first duty, after God, will be to present myself to your Lordship, to submit to your consideration and disposal both myself and the plan I have in contemplation. Among the preparatory steps to be taken my first concern is to merit your Lordship's approbation and benevolence, which I flatter myself is already ensured, tho' too undeservedly.<sup>1</sup>

The holy man then proceeds to speak of the necessity, and the possible difficulty, of procuring a few suitable confrères to unite heart and soul with him in the project. He has in view some men of whose talents, zeal, virtues and willingness he is well aware. These he has men-

<sup>1</sup> Fenwick, Carshalton, England, to Bishop Carroll, Baltimore, January 12, 1804 (Baltimore Archives, Case 3, R 1).

tioned to the Father General; but he does not yet know how many, if any, of them he may be able to obtain. With such assistants, the guidance of heaven, and the bishop's "benevolent influence," he can reasonably promise himself that his efforts will be crowned with success; and that he will be able to reproduce, on a smaller scale, the plan of Bornheim which had been the source of so much good in England. His purpose in such an institution is the education of youth and the establishment of his Order in his native land—designing the work of education, apart from the good that will result to the American Church from such a labor in itself, to be an aid in building up his institute, that its missionaries may help to carry the message of saving truth through all the new republic. Such, he says, "is the object of my ardent wishes and ambition and feeble prayers."

Although no formal document to that effect can now be found, it is evident from the tone of the whole letter that Bishop Carroll was not only conversant with these aims, but had given them his encouragement. So the humble friar continues: "In realizing these sentiments, I am well assured of your Lordship's cordial approbation and support."

In that spirit of candor, trust and obedience which characterized his entire life, the future apostle enclosed in the letter to Bishop Carroll another to his uncle, Father John Fenwick, to inform him and his own brothers of his approaching return to America. That all unnecessary delay may be avoided, he urges them to consult with the ordinary of Baltimore, and with his approbation and counsel to select a locality in which to set

the plan on foot; to devise measures for its success; and to make arrangements for the beginning of the work on the arrival of himself and companions. As there are little hopes of obtaining the necessary means in England, they should send him from eighty to one hundred pounds for the purchase of books and to aid in defraying the expenses of the voyage.<sup>2</sup> The bishop is requested kindly to use his influence in urging this duty upon the friar's brothers. His services in this matter will be another title to gratitude.

Meanwhile, as the reader will doubtless remember, obstacles arose and temporarily delayed the execution of Father Fenwick's designs. Not to leave his friend, Bishop Carroll, in suspense, he wrote to inform that prelate of the new difficulty. But in this letter, as in all documents from the kindly friar's hands, one fails to find a word of wrath, criticism or complaint. Like those we have given on previous pages, it everywhere breathes a spirit of humility, gentleness and obedience worthy of a Francis of Assisi. Withal, it shows the strength of character possessed by the man of God, as well as his determination to persevere in his holy purpose, now that it had received the sanction of the Order's Superior General.

Our Vicar General at Rome [he says] has sanctioned my plan and granted me leave to quit this Province in order to establish a *new one* in my native country; but, as his communication has not been official, nor formally made to [Rev.] Mr. Underhill or myself, he, as Provincial, insists upon his right of jurisdiction over me till the formality is fulfilled. Therefore, in dubiis tutior pars [in doubt the safer part] is for me to defer my departure, to suspend my design till the will of heaven is further demonstrated by

<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, this document cannot now be discovered; but its contents are revealed in the letter to Bishop Carroll, as related in the text.



an obedience or formal order from the General's own hand, which *I now daily expect, having given notice of the Provincial's objections.* I have already a recruit of three confrères who zealously offer me their service and wish to join me in the arduous and, I trust, meritorious enterprise. [These are] Fathers Wilson and Angier at Bornhem College, and an Italian Father at the Convent of the Minerva. The two former are well known to Father John Fenwick; the latter is particularly known to and recommended by Father Concanen. He is actually Novice Master, distinguished for his piety, experience and knowledge, even in the English language. I flatter myself with being joined by these later in America, if Almighty God blesses my design and feeble efforts; and if your Lordship will honor me with your benevolent protection and good counsel, which I confidently rely upon.<sup>3</sup>

The holy religious then proceeds to tell Doctor Carroll that he has written Father John Fenwick again on the matter of the proposed foundation. So he says:

It now remains for me to beg of your Lordship to promote the projected plan: first, by engaging my brothers and relations to enter into my views in this affair, as I expect to meet with some opposition and difficulty from that quarter; secondly, by pointing out and determining them to prepare the house, etc., and necessary funds for the purpose.

All this expense, of course, was to be defrayed out of Father Edward's part of the paternal estate. He has written to Doctor Concanen to have Father Tosi, the Roman recruit, start for Baltimore as soon as he can, and feels that the bishop will receive him as he would receive Fenwick himself. The other two confrères will follow as soon as permitted. But, he continues:

I must beg a great share in your Lordship's prayers, that Almighty God may bless my weak endeavours and good will, [and]

<sup>3</sup> Fenwick, Carshalton, England, to Bishop Carroll, Baltimore, May 5, 1804 (Baltimore Archives, Case 3, R 2).

that He may perfect the work which, I hope, He has begun. I have no dependence whatever but on Him alone, to whom nothing is impossible. Of myself, my Lord, I am incapable of *any service whatever* to the mission, unless in devoting my little patrimony and bodily strength to the object I have in view.

Owing to a break in the correspondence—due of course to time, accident or carelessness, agencies that have caused the loss of many valuable documents—we can now know the purport of Bishop Carroll's response to the humble friar's letters only through others on the same topic, and the reception accorded him on his return to America. Sailing from London, in the early days of September, 1804, Fathers Fenwick and Angier landed at Norfolk, Virginia, towards the end of November, after a long and tedious voyage of more than two months and a half. From Norfolk they hastened on to Captain James Fenwick's, an uncle of Father Edward, who lived on the Saint George's River, in southern Maryland. Here the future apostle wrote, November 29, 1804, to Bishop Carroll to acquaint him of the arrival of himself and companion.

The lowly friar had not set foot on his native soil, or seen any of his relations for more than twenty years. It would perhaps require the pen of a De Quincy to picture the feelings of his pure soul, when he found himself again amidst the familiar scenes of his youth, and surrounded by those to whom he was bound by the strongest bonds of affection. For, thoroughly a man of God though Father Fenwick was, nor piety, nor absence, nor time had chilled his love either for his country or for his kindred. Accordingly, whilst he was anxious to pay his homage in person to the head of the American Church, to consult him on the proposed province of

Dominicans, and to set about the work that had brought him home, he tells the prelate that he wishes first to see his people living along the way to the cities of Washington and Baltimore. He expects the arrival of two other brethren in the near future, has some letters for the bishop, and would be happy to be honored with a few lines directed to his brother James' home, near Piscataway, about fourteen miles south of Washington.<sup>4</sup>

The good man was saddened at the thought that his brothers had taken no steps towards forwarding the plans, of which he had written to them. I "am sorry indeed [he says] to learn here that nothing is prepared for me, no place fixed upon, as I had flattered myself and others there would be." But the reason of their course was perhaps due in part to Bishop Carroll's design of sending the new recruits to Kentucky, of which we have spoken, and which he had likely made known to the friar's relations. It would seem, too, that the bishop, in the rush of business, must have misunderstood the good priest's desires; for immediately on arriving at his brother-in-law's, Nicholas Young's, in Washington City, he writes:

I was honoured with your esteemed favour of the 5th inst., on my arrival at Mr. Nicholas Young's, and am gratefully obliged to your Lordship for the cordial reception and good advice you offer. I conceive it to be prudent and necessary not to be precipitate in my undertaking, but to consult deliberately and wait experience and favourable circumstances. However, [I] must observe for the present that it is totally owing to my inaccuracy and inattention, which I am sorry for, if your Lordship did not clearly understand from my letters the chief and primary object of my coming over to be that of establishing the Order of St. Dominic by any possible means, which might hereafter afford

<sup>4</sup> Fenwick, Saint-George's, Maryland, to Bishop Carroll, Baltimore, November 29, 1804 (Baltimore Archives, Case 3, R 3).

assistance to the missions in my native country at large, and that I conceived the only way of establishing it would be in a College or Convent. For this purpose alone, my Lord, I applied and with great difficulty obtained permission of my superiors, as also the engagement of three of my confrères, one of whom is Mr. Angier, nephew, as you observe, of your respectable friend, Mr. Thomas Angier. This subject, therefore, we will resume when I can have the honor and consolation of seeing your Lordship, which I hope will be soon after the Epiphany.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, he assures the bishop that any orders or instructions that he may see fit to send, will be gladly received and faithfully executed by himself and brethren.

Father Fenwick's design had always been to found his Order in his native Maryland, which he loved with an affection akin to that of a son for a mother. Keen, therefore, was his disappointment on learning that Bishop Carroll desired that Kentucky should be the first sphere of apostolic labor for the Friars Preacher. But he was too zealous a priest to hesitate to go wherever his services were most needed, as well as a religious too thoroughly trained in obedience not to submit readily to the voice of authority. The bishop, no doubt, convinced him that the college of Georgetown and that of Saint Mary's in the episcopal city were quite sufficient for the Catholics in the former colony of Lord Baltimore, while the west was sadly in want of just such an institution as that which he proposed to establish.

Accordingly, it was agreed between the two friends that the new arrival should visit Kentucky, view the prospects offered his purpose there, and, if at all feasible, elect to make that part of the Lord's vineyard the field of his toil. But, as during the winter season which

<sup>5</sup> Fenwick, Washington City, to Bishop Carroll, December 15, 1804 (Baltimore Archives, Case 3, R 4).



was set in, travel over the primitive roads was almost impossible, the long journey was not to be taken until the spring. Meanwhile, at the request of the ordinary, Fenwick took charge of the Piscataway and adjoining missions in Prince George's County. Angier was placed in care of Upper and Lower Zacchia, now respectively the parishes of Waldorf and Bryantown, Charles County, and Mattawoman, Prince George's County, Maryland.

On the return of good weather, the zealous priest, accompanied by Nicholas Young, his brother-in-law, a man of experience and good judgment, as well as an exemplary Catholic, set out on his long tour to Kentucky. At Saint Francis', Scott County, possibly by prearrangement, he met Father Badin, by whom his coming was warmly welcomed. Thence the future bishop continued his way to the other principal Catholic colonies. Everywhere was he received by the people with open arms. But the settlement on Cartwright's Creek, Washington County, where he tarried nearly a week, waiting the return of the state's lone missionary from a distant pastoral visit, appealed to him as the best suited for his purpose. Satisfied, as we shall see, with the prospects held out to him in Kentucky, and convinced that Bishop Carroll had acted in the interest of both the Church and the proposed institute, he hurried back to the east to report to his ordinary and Rome, to await Fathers Wilson and Tuite, whose arrival was expected at any time, and to make preparations for settling his little bands of priests in the west. Still another cause of his haste were the official documents which he hoped soon to receive from Father Concanen, and which were necessary that he might begin his work. While he was

pleased with the outlook, one cannot help thinking that, quite naturally, the good friar's extraordinary love for the state of his birth caused him to regret that the first foundation of his Order in the United States was not to be in Maryland.

We cannot do better than let Father Badin himself tell the impression made upon him by the Dominican's goodness, candor and simplicity. In spite of its length, the document merits to be given in its entirety. Although, five months later, and because of an unfriendly influence, he spoke rather differently, the letter which we here reproduce, leaves no doubt as to the veteran missionary's first impressions, and shows the admiration which the friar's zeal, humility and gentle disposition enkindled in nearly all with whom he came into contact. Writing to Bishop Carroll, May 15, 1805, Father Badin tells his ordinary:

I have the happiness this day of enjoying the company of the Rev. Mr. Fenwick which you had announced in former letters, intimating as soon as he arrived in America that, as Kentucky was likely to be a center from which true Religion would be disseminated in the western countries, you would engage him to turn his views towards our desolate congregations so needful and capable of cultivation. I never doubted of your sincere wish to procure for us any spiritual assistance, which indeed was not to be obtained in your Diocese without your direction or concurrence. Many are the tokens of your goodness towards me and my numerous congregations, and I have now to return my heartfelt thanks for making Kentucky so effectually the first object of your pastoral solicitude upon the arrival of St. Dominic's family. Flattering myself that I seconded your views, knowing the scarcity of Priests in your immense Diocese, fully sensible of the difficulty and almost impossibility to replace clergymen as they depart from life or from duty, impressed also with the idea confirmed by former experience that much less good is done by individual

clergymen, isolated as they are or unconnected with a regular body acting uniformly by the same principles of obedience, disinterestedness and zeal, seeing how the missionaries along the Mississippi have already abandoned their numerous flocks to follow the Spanish government, apprehensive also that the service of Almighty God and the salvation of souls cannot be permanently secured to this and the neighboring countries but by the exertions of a regular body of pious and enlightened men, who shall not fail of success when established under the blessing of heaven in a country where there are no prejudices of the civil constitution to oppose their humane and religious views; evidencing every day the alarming progress of infidelity and vice which threatens us with an almost universal deluge, unless our youth be regenerated and properly educated; actuated by these and other congenial motives, I have made a proposal to Mr. Fenwick which is submitted to your Reverence, and which I earnestly request you to sanction. I have begged this gentleman to exonerate me of the trouble of holding so much ecclesiastical property, which in my opinion will do much more good to my fellow-creatures when vested in the Order of St. Dominic, under your episcopal jurisdiction.

Wherefore, I hope you will grant me the favour or leave of transferring to that religious order the ecclesiastical property now in my hands, to which I have added two hundred and twenty acres of my own land, the whole containing upwards of one hundred acres of cleared ground, with improvements. By these means may be immediately started the intended plan of an Academy with a moderate assistance from the Catholics of this State who will undoubtedly join their cordial endeavours to procure their own happiness, that of their children and their children's posterity. I had conceived for these ten years past the desire of seeing in Kentucky such an establishment arise, the which appeared to me almost a chimera, since I saw then neither temporal means for a foundation nor any probable hope of having the co-operation of such men as would be calculated to answer so useful things. But how limited are the views of men and how evident that the Divine providence over the Church is *attingens a fine usque ad finem fortiter disponens omnia suaviter!*

As Mr. Fenwick and his brethren will assume the obligation of fulfilling the duties of the mission as well as myself, and it is important that the missionaries of the country should as much as possible be directed by the same spirit, I do humbly request and confidently hope that you will give me leave to be associated to St. Dominic's family. I conceived this wish as well as the other resolution within two days after Mr. Fenwick's arrival, and have never varied.

Should I have been unwilling to apply to its intended use the property trusted by Providence as a depositum in my hands, I would esteem myself accountable for the good not done, which will be otherwise done to my Parishioners and other denominations, and for the evil which might have been prevented and I hope shall be prevented by Mr. Fenwick and his brethren.

Craving your Episcopal Benediction, I have the honour to be very respectfully, Most Reverend Sir,

Your obedient Son in Christ,  
Stephen Theodore Badin.<sup>6</sup>

The candor and sincerity of this letter are too patent to be questioned. Its importance in the life of Cincinnati's first bishop is too great for its sentiments to be expressed in words other than those of the missionary himself. The sudden and complete change of sentiment which Father Badin underwent after the friar had returned to Maryland, is so clearly traceable to the influence of Rev. Charles Nerinckx, that no subterfuge on the part of the French missionary can conceal the fact. Nor do the later unfavorable letters from the same pen, all written under the impulse of a strong bias derived in no small measure from the same source, affect in the least these first impressions. Likely, indeed, it was due in part to the recollection of this early cordial meeting that the Dominicans, in spite of misunderstandings,

<sup>6</sup> Rev. S. T. Badin, Kentucky, to Bishop Carroll, Baltimore, May 15, 1805 (Baltimore Archives, Case 1, G 9).



ever cherished a feeling of affection for Kentucky's apostle, and in the end proved to be his best friends.<sup>7</sup>

On his return from Kentucky, Father Fenwick again took charge of the mission of Piscataway, pending the time when all should be in readiness to move the little band of priests to the west. But fearing, as he supposed three out of every five letters were lost in their transmission to so great a distance, that his last two or three had not been received at Rome, he wrote again to Father Concanen:

I have already, [at] different times, written to your Reverence to inform you of my arrival, with Father Antoninus Angier, in Maryland; that I have met with the most cordial reception from my friends and [Right] Rev. Doctor Carroll, with every encouragement to persevere in my undertaking. Nothing is wanting to ensure success but the grace of God, with able and zealous co-operators.<sup>8</sup>

In all these letters the good priest says he has repeated his solicitation "for every necessary instruction," and authority to open a novitiate and found a college. Without these and the "aid of zealous and enlightened men," he can hardly hope to succeed. With them success seems assured. Continuing, he writes:

I have mentioned twice to you the advice and encouragement Bishop Carroll gives me to fix our establishment in the Province of Kentucky, where every generous offer and solicitation is made to me by the Catholics of that extensive country, which I have accepted of conditionally: *i. e.*, if our General approves of it, and

<sup>7</sup> This misunderstanding will be treated more fully in a subsequent chapter. But it should be noted here that, as will be seen, Father Badin's change of mind took place rather suddenly after the arrival of Rev. Charles Nerinckx in Kentucky (July 18, 1805), and without his having seen, meanwhile, either Fenwick or any other Dominican.

<sup>8</sup> Fenwick, Piscataway, Maryland, to Rev. R. L. Concanen, Rome, August 1, 1805 (Archives of the Dominican Master General, Rome, Codex XIII, 731).

my confrères arrive and unite with me in opinion, etc. But those good people are yet in suspense on my account, as Rev. Father Wilson is not yet arrived, without whom I can do nothing to the purpose. He promised to join me in June last, but no news of him yet. Meanwhile, agreeably to Bishop Carroll's request and advice, I am labouring on the mission, raw and inexperienced as I am, charged with a numerous congregation, who had been fifteen months without a pastor, till I came among them. Here I hope to acquire more experience and virtue, whilst my plan may ripen for execution. The graces and blessings with which God has favoured me in my feeble ministry are inexpressible; the effects thereof in the congregation are no less wonderful: *Ipsi soli honor et gloria* [to Him alone be the honor and the glory]. The distress of the Catholics in this country, particularly in Kentucky, is beyond description. The scarcity of Priests, the numerous and dispersed congregations, their desolation and pressing solicitations for spiritual succour, should suffice to move stones, if possible, to compassion.

In Maryland, he says, there is scarcely a priest who has not charge of from two to four missions, ten or fifteen miles apart. Many have to ride forty or fifty miles, and some as far as a hundred, to visit their flocks. His own congregation, which he describes as "tolerably compact," and "a well-regulated, pious set of people," obliges him to go on horseback from forty to fifty miles. Taking up the subject of Kentucky again, the man of God tells his friend:

In compliance with Bishop Carroll's advice, I visited Kentucky to inform myself of its climate, situation and resources, as likewise to know the real distress and dispositions of the Catholics there. My curiosity is perfectly satisfied, and [I am] much pleased with the country and inhabitants, particularly with the fervor, zeal and liberality of the Catholics, who made me every generous offer and even importunity to fix among them. They propose building me a college for the education of their youth, etc. They have opened a subscription for the purpose and have

raised a considerable sum for it, tho' not yet sufficient, and only wait my answer and approbation, which I dare not give till my confrères all unite with me. I hope, Rev. dear Sir, you will exert your usual zeal for the cause, and accelerate the affair [as much] as depends on you.

Ever anxious to gather efficient workers around him, the good priest urges the departure of Father Tosi. He regrets that he cannot remit the money necessary for the travelling expenses of that worthy gentleman just now. But if he will come, he will soon be able to refund the sum borrowed for that purpose; for he expects soon to sell the eight hundred acres of land coming to him from his father's estate. Of Father Badin he writes:

In Kentucky there is but one priest, Rev. Mr. Badin, and about ten thousand Catholics.<sup>9</sup> That good and zealous man has been there near twelve years, the two or three last of which he has been the only Pastor for those numerous congregations. He received me, when I went there, with open arms and inexpressible joy, [and] made me the generous offer of his place and property (a house and land and negroes, etc.), with all the church property, consisting of several presbyteries [and] seven or eight hundred acres of land, *made over to him* by the several congregations for the mission. This proposal, however, he submits to Bishop Carroll's approbation, who applauds and consents to it.<sup>10</sup> This good and zealous Priest, moreover, petitions to be admitted into the Order to become a Dominican. I am persuaded he will be a good and essentially useful member. Pray what is your opinion and that of his holy Paternity? *Can I not admit him without re-*

<sup>9</sup> This seems to have been an overestimate of the number of Catholics in the state at that time.

<sup>10</sup> Some have maintained that a letter of Father Badin to Bishop Carroll, dated October 5-12, 1805 (Baltimore Archives, Case 1, G 10 and 11), shows that the bishop demurred to the proposals of that missionary to join the Order of Saint Dominic, and to bestow the church lands in Kentucky upon the friars. But the above explicit declaration by Fenwick, together with a careful examination of Badin's letter (October 5-12, 1805) and Doctor Carroll's ingenuous character, proves the contrary. For this letter see *The Catholic Historical Review*, VI, 68-73.

*quiring a usual regular noviceship*, as he is an experienced missionary, a truly pious, worthy and enlightened Priest, ordained by Bishop Carroll, esteemed and beloved by his Lordship and by all who know him? He has written to Cardinal Onesti Braschi, giving a full description of Kentucky and his mission there, to which I refer you.<sup>11</sup>

The presbyteries, of which the future bishop speaks in his letter, were Father Badin's home, known as Saint Stephen's, a residence built by Rev. Michael J. Fournier on the Rolling Fork, and a house in the Catholic settlement of Scott County. All three were small, primitive log cabins covered with clapboards. The various church lands were small tracts, mostly still covered with their primeval forests. The presbyteries, in the mind of Father Fenwick, would serve as homes or lodging places for his priests attending the places where they were located, or perhaps even become in time centers of missionary activity. And although the farms were then of little value, he hoped no doubt that, when cleared and brought under cultivation, they could be utilized as a means of support for the ministers of the Church, in the same way that he had seen similar possessions used to good purpose in his native Maryland.

These plans, however, were not to be realized. Yet events of which we shall speak in the following chapter, soon occurred to hasten the realization of the project that had brought the zealous friar back from Europe to labor for his own American Church. But it is worthy of note, in this connection, that the gracious spirit with which Father Fenwick, as will be revealed in the course of our volume, took the failure of his plans in regard to these lands, and his example of detachment from the

<sup>11</sup> We could not find this document at Rome.



things of earth, became an inheritance of the province of Friars Preacher he established. His spirit became so ingrained in its members that they sought to live too literally the Scriptural counsels: "It is a more blessed thing to give, rather than to receive;" and: "Having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content." They labored and stinted themselves, giving their small earnings towards the erection of churches for the people to such an extent that they were often in the sorest need—always in great straits to support clerical students and novices for the Order.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps few saints have been more detached from the things of earth than was the subject of this narrative. Perhaps few have been more zealous in the cause of Christ or for the salvation of souls. He was not content with his own personal sanctification, or simply to spend and be spent for his God and his fellow-man. His broad, enlightened zeal led him to seek, as he himself often expressed it, "to plant a little nursery" wherein could be brought up missionaries who would carry the light of truth and spread the kingdom of God throughout his native land. When he sought wordly means, as he had to do at times, it was ever and always for this noble purpose.

<sup>12</sup> Indeed, this worldly indifference was carried so far through all the after-years that, at the province's centenary, it would not have had the wherewith to purchase the ground on which stands its present House of Studies at the Catholic University of Washington, had not two friends lately left it legacies. One of these amounted to \$5,000; the other to \$10,000. Confronted with what appeared to them almost an impossibility, the erection of a convent worthy of the great university group of buildings, the fathers appealed to the congregations which the Order had served so long in a spirit of disinterestedness. The result was the magnificent College of the Immaculate Conception.

## CHAPTER VI

### A NEW PROVINCE OF DOMINICANS

THE pious priest's heart rejoiced at the arrival, September 10, 1805, of Fathers Wilson and Tuite.<sup>1</sup> They also readily concurred in the wish of Bishop Carroll that the Dominicans should make Kentucky their future home. But nothing could be done in the matter until further authorization came from Rome. For this reason, the newcomers, like their confrères, while awaiting word from the Order's General and considering ways and means to ensure the success of the mission that had brought them from the Old World, gave their services to the Church of Maryland, and won the confidence of the venerable prelate of Baltimore.

In the meantime, however, assured of the approbation of Bishop Carroll, Father Concanen had shown a commendable activity in the holy cause at the Eternal City. Doubtless because of the threatening political horizon of Europe, he feared delay might be disastrous to Fenwick's project. The same disturbed state of the politics of the Old World convinced the Order's Father General that it were better to establish a new province from the outset, rather than merely an American convent, as he first intended, directly under his own jurisdiction. But as the institute's constitutions require at least three formal convents before a province can be

<sup>1</sup> Rev. S. T. Wilson, Georgetown, D. C., to Rev. R. L. Concanen, Rome, October 14, 1805 (Archives of the Dominican Master General, Rome, Codex XIII, 731).

erected, the authority of the Holy See was necessary for such an extraordinary procedure.

Accordingly, on the receipt of the letter of the American priest announcing his departure from England, Doctor Concanen laid the matter before Pius VII through the Congregation of the Propaganda. On March 11, 1805, that august body drew up a decree which not only gave the papal *beneplicit* to the plan, subject to the will and consent of Bishop Carroll, but appointed that distinguished prelate delegate apostolic to establish, if he saw fit, a province of Dominicans anywhere in his immense diocese. This was an honor conferred upon the father of our American hierarchy that has few, if any, parallels in the history of the Order of Saint Dominic. But as Pius VII had not returned from Paris, where he crowned Napoleon Bonaparte Emperor of France in the preceding December, it was not until the 19th of May that the decree received the approbation of His Holiness, and not until the first day of June that it was signed by Cardinal di Pietro and Archbishop Coppola, respectively the prefect and the secretary of the Propaganda.<sup>2</sup>

June 22, 1805, the Most Rev. Pius J. Gaddi, the Dominican Superior General, issued letters patent appointing Father Fenwick head of the new province, when it should be founded.<sup>3</sup> On the same day, Father Concanen sent both documents, together with a letter of his own, to America. They arrived at Baltimore in the

<sup>2</sup> The pro-prefect of the Propaganda, Cardinal Dugnani addressed a letter to Bishop Carroll on the subject as early as December 22, 1804. But the unsettled state of things in Rome caused the Sacred Congregation to proceed as narrated in the text, without waiting for a reply from Baltimore. All the documents in the matter are to be found in the Archives of the Dominican Master General (Codex XIII, 731). They are in the handwriting of Father Concanen.

<sup>3</sup> Archives of Saint Joseph's Province.

early days of the next October, and Bishop Carroll forwarded them to the humble friar at his mission of Piscataway. The reply was a letter expressive of profound gratitude and affection.

I have the honor [he writes] of receiving, through your Lordship's hands, a letter from Father Concanen, dated June 22, 1805, transmitting to me our Vicar General's Patent, with every faculty and instruction from him, and the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, for establishing our Community, opening a Novitiate, and founding a new Province of Dominicans independent of any other—with due deference to your Lordship's opinion and approbation. I enclose a copy of Father Concanen's letter and the *decree* of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda; and would send also our General's Patent, but suppose it unnecessary. And I judge it too long to copy; though [I] cannot fail to transcribe the sentiments of respect and gratitude he expresses in your Lordship's regard for the kind protection and encouragement you have granted to me and mine, as a pledge of which his holy Paternity admits your Lordship to *all the suffrages of our Order*.<sup>4</sup>

Here follows a copy of that part of Father Gaddi's Latin letter which declares the bishop a noteworthy benefactor (*praeclarum benefactorem*) of the Order of Saint Dominic, and makes him a participant in the prayers and other suffrages of its members the world over. Fenwick then adds: "Should your Lordship wish to see the originals, I will convey them by any safe hand. I judged it unnecessary to send them by post, for fear of miscarriage and future nonplus." All necessary documents being now received from abroad, Fathers Wilson and Tuite will start at once for Kentucky. He himself and Father Angier must go also in the spring. For this reason, as they have much business to attend

<sup>4</sup> Fenwick, Zacchia, to Bishop Carroll, October 10, 1805 (Baltimore Archives, Case 3, R 5).



to, and many things are to be prepared, they will be obliged to relinquish their spiritual charges by the first of March, that they may be able to depart early in April. Then the man of God proceeds to say:

I earnestly recommend these good people to your Lordship's assistance. I know their desolation will be great, when we leave them, unless consoled by the arrival of a Pastor. We also beg your Lordship's blessing and good prayers. With respectful compliments also to Rev. Mr. Beeston and all the gentlemen of the Seminary, we request a remembrance in their prayers and Holy Sacrifices. Your Lordship will be kind enough to receive and have secured whatever goods, etc., may arrive from Antwerp to your care for Mr. Wilson. Mr. Nicholas Young, as my agent, will answer for expenses and direct what is to be done with it. . . . I shall be glad to know if you have any late news from Rev. Mr. Badin. I am rather surprised at receiving no answer from him to my last scrawl. Pray, Sir, has he power to consecrate Altar Stones and Chalices? I beg to know if you consecrated a Chalice a little before you left Baltimore last. Mr. David had one made for him at my request and brought down to me, but I totally forgot to ask if it was consecrated.

Father Concanen's letter on the same topic must have been the source of much consolation not only to Fenwick and his associates but to Bishop Carroll. Writing to his American brother, the distinguished Irish Dominican says:

I never cease to remember you and your holy enterprise, particularly *ad Sanctam Aram* [at the holy altar]. I have done here all that could be expected towards the great plan in view, as you may perceive by the very interesting papers I here inclose. You cannot imagine how much your pious undertaking is admired and applauded by the Most Eminent Cardinals of the Sacred Congregation, and indeed by everybody that knows of it.<sup>5</sup>

But Father Fenwick must not expect any financial

<sup>5</sup> Concanen, Rome, to Fenwick, care of Carroll, June 22, 1805 (*ibid.*).

assistance from Rome or the Italian peninsula, however greatly he is in need of resources. In consequence of the robberies and the plunderings of the French armies, and the ruin and devastation that have everywhere followed in the wake of the revolution, all have as much as they can do to re-establish their own churches and religious houses. For the same reason, good Father Tosi is unable to leave Europe, and awaits the means necessary for his journey to America. These may be sent him through Messrs. Wright and Company, bankers of London. In this connection the General's assistant writes:

I forward by this channel the present packet. . . . I fancy you will convey your letters to me by means of the said Messrs. Wright and Co.; and it would be doing a favour to the most worthy Doctor Carroll to propose to his Lordship this medium of communication with Rome. Be so good as to acquaint this excellent Prelate that I wrote to him at the beginning of this year, but have not since received any accounts from him. Duplicates and triplicates of his faculties have been dispatched from Propaganda, and we have no idea if he has ever received any copies of them. If you find that this packet goes speedily by means of Mr. Wright, his Lordship might open a correspondence with him, and in his first letter to Propaganda request the secretary to consign in future all papers destined for himself to me, as his agent in curia. I apprehend there must have been some negligence on the part of Mr. Filicchi of Leghorn and other mediators. . . . No further information can be expected via Leghorn, as I imagine the new King of Italy, Bonaparte, will soon take possession of that port. Be pleased to present my humble respects to his Lordship, Doctor Carroll, and my best wishes and compliments to all your coadjutors in vinea Domini [in the Lord's vineyard]. Let me have the consolation of hearing from you soon, if possible.

In a postscript the learned Irish priest refers to a question which was of the keenest interest to the fathers, the establishment of the English Dominican Sisters in

the United States. When he hears that the new province is well settled, he will see what can be done in this latter affair. If the project crystallizes, he would like to see the sisters devote themselves to the Christian instruction of poor girls and women, along the lines of the new institute which he has lately had confirmed for Bishop Moylan of Cork. "Such an undertaking [he believes] would be of infinite use to Doctor Carroll and to Religion, as it proves to be in Ireland."

A letter of Father Wilson to Rome, dated, "Georgetown, October 14, 1805," and written, as he tells us, *en route* to Kentucky, shows that he and father Tuite started for their future home in the west, immediately on the acceptance by Bishop Carroll of his appointment as delegate apostolic to found the new province.<sup>6</sup> While descending the Alleghany Mountains, their horses became unmanageable and upset their wagon. In the accident Father Wilson had an arm broken. His companion received an ugly gash on the forehead, marks of which he carried to his grave. This accident not only made the rest of the journey painful for the travellers, but so retarded its progress that they did not reach their destination until the last days of 1805. Both priests were still suffering from their wounds and bruises, when they arrived at Father Badin's home; nor were they able, for some weeks, to give a helping hand on the missions.<sup>7</sup>

But as soon as the two zealous friars had sufficiently recovered from the effects of the painful accident, they entered upon the arduous labors which were to win

<sup>6</sup> Archives of the Dominican Master General, Codex XIII, 731.

<sup>7</sup> Rev. Charles Nerinckx, Kentucky, to Joseph Peemans, Louvain, January 6, 1806—quoted by Peemans in an account of the missions of Kentucky to the Propaganda (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. III, ff: 235-260); a rough sketch, in manuscript, of Saint Joseph's Province of Dominicans by Rev. Stephen Byrne, O.P.

them honored names and to effect much good for the Catholic religion in Kentucky. Father Tuite went to reside at the house of Thomas Gwynn, a Catholic gentleman who lived near where stands the present Nazareth Academy, Nelson County, which he made a center whence to attend the missions of Bardstown, Poplar Neck and Cox's Creek, until his superior should arrive and open a college. Father Wilson was sent to take charge of the mission of Saint Ann's, on Cartwright's Creek, the largest in the state. He made his home with Henry Boone, a pious man living in the vicinity of the church. Along with his apostolic work, he busied himself with the education of Robert and Nicholas Young, two nephews of Father Fenwick who had accompanied or soon followed him to Kentucky with the intention of entering the proposed college, and perhaps later the novitiate. Other boys and young men of the neighborhood, similarly inclined, it would seem, also came to receive lessons from the learned divine.<sup>8</sup>

Thus was laid the foundation of the well-known educational institution which was soon to be dedicated to its wholesome work under the patronage of St. Thomas of Aquin. The arrival of the fathers who were still in Maryland, was anxiously awaited by those in Kentucky. All were eager to begin an establishment which they hoped to see become a center of intellectual and apostolic activity, contributing its quota towards the furtherance of the Church in the new west, and diffusing its good influence over the country. But, at the earnest request of Bishop Carroll, it was agreed that Father Angier should remain in Maryland until his presence at the proposed college became indispensable. The solicitations of the

<sup>8</sup> Rev. Stephen Byrne, as in the preceding note.



same prelate also caused Father John Fenwick, of whom mention has been made, to be left indefinitely in the east, where he was beloved alike by priest and people. Indeed, the sacrifice of the services of this learned and zealous friar was a distinct loss not only to the fathers, but to the infant Church of Kentucky.

The superior was not able to join his brethren as soon as he had hoped. His relations, it would appear, were not willing that he should receive all that had been left to him by his father's will; and it was adjudged wise to make concessions in behalf of family affections. Nor was this all. It was no easy matter, at that day, to find in Charles County, Maryland, a purchaser for so much real estate who could soon pay the money, as was necessary if the commencement of the good priest's work in Kentucky were not to be delayed again. This entailed a further sacrifice, for he felt that he could defer his departure no longer; he, therefore, sold his land for considerably less than its value.<sup>9</sup>

Because of these annoyances, it was not until July, 1806, that the superior of the little band of Dominicans reached Kentucky. Here he found that the former generous dispositions of Father Badin had been supplanted by an attitude void of all sympathy, if not positively unfriendly. The plan of conveying the various parcels of church land to the friars had been cancelled, and some of the wealthier Catholics, anxious to promote their cause, had offered different tracts to Fathers Wilson and Tuite. But in this also the hardy missionary showed so officious a spirit that such proffers not only proved abortive, but threatened to become an occasion of trouble

<sup>9</sup> Two deeds by Fenwick to Joseph Gardiner are in the Recorder's Office, La Plata, Charles County, Maryland, and bear date of June 5, 1806.

and misunderstanding among the people.<sup>10</sup> It was fortunate, therefore, that Bishop Carroll had given Father Fenwick, before he quitted Maryland, the option of locating his convent and college in whatever part of Kentucky he should judge best suited to his purpose.

For these reasons, the superior of the Dominicans, almost immediately after arriving at his destination, purchased the home plantation of one John Waller, which is now known as "Saint Rose's Farm." The plantation contained some five hundred acres, was situated a little more than two miles from the town of Springfield, Washington County, and was in the heart of the principal Catholic settlement in the state, which was strung along the watershed of Cartwright's Creek. It was, furthermore, in the congregation assigned to Father Wilson, and centrally located in regard to the other Catholic colonies. In times past farms were far more important factors in the equipment of educational and religious institutions than they are today. They were, in fact, an almost indispensable adjunct. The land purchased by Father Fenwick, while in great part rolling, was good—some of it of inexhaustible fertility. The climate was healthy and vigorous, and the country remarkable for its beauty. As far as could then be seen, perhaps no more promising site could have been selected by the friar for the purposes he had in mind.

On the Waller plantation there stood a brick house, one of the earliest built in that part of Kentucky. It was two stories high, in a fair state of preservation, and ample enough to make a temporary home for the little community and a few boys until a larger structure could be erected. The outbuildings and improvements

<sup>10</sup> More than one of Father Badin's own letters show how he interfered in these transactions.

were good. A grist and a saw mill located near the creek, which furnished sufficient water to run them the greater part of the twelvemonth, stood the future institution in good stead for many years.<sup>11</sup>

Getting possession of his purchase, early in December, 1806, the superior called Father Tuite from Bardstown, and Father Wilson from Saint Ann's which was only two miles distant, and could easily be attended from their new home. Before the close of the month, the Waller house was blessed and opened as an abode for the little community. The modest sanctuary of retreat was consecrated to God under the patronage of Rose of Lima, America's flower of purity and holiness, a Dominican tertiary, and the first native of the new world to be placed in the calendar of saints. But the new-born institute was more than a religious community; it was a province of Friars Preacher—the first in English-speaking America. So keen was the Father General's interest in the enterprise, that he gave the new branch of his Order the name of his own patron, Saint Joseph.

Such was the birth of the first house of Dominican Fathers in our great American republic, the mother, so to say, of Kentucky's many Catholic institutions, and the oldest convent built on the original soil of the United States west of the Alleghany Mountains. As the late Rev. Louis G. Deppen says in *The Record* of Louisville, Kentucky, February 1, 1917: "Among the most sacred and venerable places in the Diocese of Louisville is the Priory of St. Rose, the original mother-convent of the Dominicans in the United States." Some years previous to that date, the same editor, not less distinguished for scholarship than for piety, had written in the columns of his journal:

<sup>11</sup> Waller's deed bears the date of December 1, 1806.

There are three institutions in our ancient Diocese that are very near and dear to us all, and that grow nearer and dearer as the days lapse into years, and the years into God's Eternal Year. To us and to Catholic Kentucky, they are a sacred Trinity, hallowed and mellowed by a century of unbroken life and endeavour. One is already crowned with a hundred years; the other two are in the ending twilight of a century; all three are rich, inexplicably rich, in terrestrial and celestial fruitage:—St. Rose, Loretto, Nazareth. In any one of them, our weary bones, whether in the flesh or out of the flesh, would gladly and peacefully rest,—rest as does the little one on the bosom of its mother.<sup>12</sup>

In the same spirit, the writer of an article on the Catholic institutions of Kentucky that appeared in *The Catholic Advocate*, April 3, 1847, tells us: “St. Rose, a Dominican convent, situated in the middle of a most romantic landscape, and founded for a Novitiate to a Religious life, has from its origin been the retreat of men whose learning and virtues are equalled only by their modesty and humility.” These holy memories and sacred traditions, there can be no doubt, are due in large measure to the spirit implanted in this proto-convent of the west by its founder, Father Fenwick.

<sup>12</sup> *The Record*, Louisville, Kentucky, September 10, 1908.



## CHAPTER VII

### EARLY BUILDINGS AND MISSIONARY LABORS

WHILE many letters pertaining to our history can no longer be found, those that have happily survived the ravages of time, suffice to show that Father Fenwick was careful to keep both Bishop Carroll and Rome acquainted with his efforts and progress. But what with the purchase of the Waller plantation, the losses of which we have spoken, and other incidental expenses, the lowly friar was hard pressed for resources, even before the three priests could settle in their modest home.

For this reason, although the people of Kentucky, alike Catholic and non-Catholic, had engaged, mostly by promises of labor, to erect the proposed college, it was necessary to have recourse to the charitably disposed for means to carry the work to completion, and to make the preparations requisite for the acceptance and maintenance of candidates for the priesthood, until the institution should be placed on a secure basis. It was fortunate, then, that Father Fenwick, before leaving Maryland, had obtained from Bishop Carroll the following lines, in which that friendly prelate not only gave the project his hearty approval, but urged the faithful to contribute towards its realization:

The Rev. Mr. Edward D. Fenwick [he says], and other Rev. Clergymen connected with him, having proposed for themselves the establishment of a College or Academy in Kentucky, for the education of youth, I not only approve of, but greatly rejoice at their having formed such a resolution, which, if carried into effect, cannot fail of producing the most beneficial effects for

improving the minds and morals of the rising generation, and fortifying their religious principles. Believing that God in his beneficence inspired this design into their minds, I take the liberty of recommending to, and exhorting all my dear brethren and children in Christ to grant to it every encouragement they are able, and thus co-operate to the success of a work undertaken for the glory of God and their own advantage.

JOHN, *Bishop of Baltimore.*

Baltimore, April 25, 1806.

With due permission, the letter of episcopal approval was now printed. But Fenwick added to it some remarks of his own, to explain how he had entered the Order of Saint Dominic abroad with the express view of establishing it and a Dominican college in his native country for the education of youth and the preparation of young men for the priesthood. These latter, when ordained, are to labor on the American missions. He has secured the services of some learned and zealous members of his institute; but stress of means obliges him to have recourse to the aid of the well-disposed, that the plan may be brought to success.<sup>1</sup>

Copies of this letter of appeal were sent to Bishop Carroll who forwarded them to the different congregations in Maryland and eastern Pennsylvania. Armed with other copies, Fathers Fenwick and Wilson made a tour through Kentucky the better to acquaint the people with their presence and purpose, and the opportunities offered by the proposed establishment for the intellectual and religious improvement of the state. Nor did the friars, while on their journey through the Catholic settlements, forget the souls of the faithful. The documents show that they did yeoman's service by way of in-

<sup>1</sup> Baltimore Archives, Case 3, R 6.

structing the people and admitting them to the sacraments. This excursion was made during the months of September, October and November, 1806. While on the tour Father Fenwick wrote to his bishop:

I have troubled you with so many of my scrowls of late that I am almost ashamed to attempt it again. But so favorable an opportunity as this by Mr. Worland, trustee of St. Francis' Chapel, in Scott County, will, I trust, be a sufficient apology. Mr. Wilson and myself are on a tour through the different counties to visit and assist the respective congregations. We have spent a week in this place, and shall travel as far as Limestone [the present Maysville], and return to our own by Lexington and Danville. I judged this expedition necessary to make ourselves and our undertaking known to the people, many of whom would not otherwise know nor value it. I find it everywhere affords great satisfaction and joy. And the people's zeal and liberality in general are equal to their circumstances.<sup>2</sup>

One can imagine the delight with which the holy man, in the same letter, tells his protector that he expects "to begin preparing materials for building a college, etc., next Spring." With no less joy he announces that, in the near future, he will receive a few candidates for the Order who have put in their petitions, and can be accommodated in the house bought of Mr. Waller.

Prior to this, Father Fenwick had written to Doctor Concanen, repeating his hopes and his prospects. As the purchase of the large farm in Washington County, travel, etc., have exhausted his patrimony, the only support now left him are divine providence and the goodwill of the people. The Catholics of the state, though poor and lately settled, "are zealous and liberal, as far

<sup>2</sup> Fenwick, Scott County, Kentucky, to Carroll, Baltimore (Baltimore Archives, Case 3, R 11). Although this letter is not dated, other documents show that it was written in early October, 1806.

as their circumstances allow. They have engaged to build for us a College and Church by subscription. When this is done, we shall be comfortably and well fixed to promote the glory of God and [the] good of our neighbor," He expects soon to admit a few novices, for some young men have already made application for that purpose.<sup>3</sup>

Humble almost to a fault, and zealous to labor for the salvation of souls, the man of God now takes up anew the subject of having Father Wilson appointed superior, that he himself may be relieved of the burden of authority, and free to devote his time to the more active ministry of the missions. In this connection, he says: "I also request of you to obtain the nomination of Father Thomas Wilson to the office of Prior and Provincial to our new Province, as I am totally incapable of the duty." Again he urges that all faculties and privileges be sent for the Third Order of Saint Dominic and the Rosary. It is to be hoped that worthy Father Tosi will be able to obtain the means necessary to bring him to Kentucky, where his presence will be the source of great pleasure and happiness to his brethren, as well as of much good to the Church. If he can only come, the fathers will leave nothing undone to refund the money which he will have to borrow. Letters should be addressed to the care of Bishop Carroll, for the trustful friar will have everything known to his beloved ordinary.<sup>4</sup>

Indeed, the surviving letters that passed between Fenwick and Concanen are as a dictograph of time, revealing their innermost thoughts in regard to Balti-

<sup>3</sup> Yet, as has been stated, it seems that Fenwick's nephews and a few other boys had already begun their studies at the house of Henry Boone.

<sup>4</sup> Fenwick, Springfield, Kentucky, to Concanen, Rome, September 25, 1806 (Archives of the Dominican Master General, Codex XIII, 731).



more's first ordinary. They show not only the implicit confidence which they placed in that prelate, but the love, friendship and admiration which they entertained for him. This they also manifested, but without fulsome adulation, in their correspondence with Doctor Carroll himself. Thus, for instance, the Irish Dominican, writing to the bishop on other business, January 30, 1806, takes occasion to say:

I can never sufficiently thank you for the kind reception and encouragement and protection you have been pleased to show my confrères, Fenwick and companions, in their laudable undertaking. May it turn out *ad maiorem Dei Gloriam* [to the greater glory of God]. You have the humble thanks of my Father General, and of all those of my Order here. At Father Fenwick's request, I take the liberty of addressing to your care the enclosed letters for him and Father Wilson. I send them open that you may read them and then be pleased to seal and forward them to their place of abode. There are and never shall be any secrets between our correspondence. All must pass through your Lordship; all that is to be done, must be first sanctioned by you, as you are the Father and Protector of this infant colony.<sup>5</sup>

That these feelings were reciprocated by the venerable bishop of Baltimore, and that he held in the highest esteem the Friars Preacher who labored in Kentucky in the early missionary days, there can be no doubt. The best of priests could hardly desire a more excellent encomium from their ordinary than that which we here quote from the pen of the same prelate. Writing to Concanen, November 21, 1806, Carroll takes occasion to tell his friend:

In this is enclosed a letter from your worthy brother in religion, Father Edward Dominic Fenwick, who with three others

<sup>5</sup> Concanen, Rome, to Carroll. Baltimore, January 30, 1806 (Baltimore Archives, Case 2, W 3).

of his Order have begun their establishment in Kentucky. I had long encouraged their emigration from England, which offered no flattering prospect for the extension of their Order;—and so long ago as the year 1802, I had urged Mr. Short, then the Provincial of it in England, to embrace a fine opportunity which offered of obtaining a most advantageous settlement in the United States. But it seems that Mr. Short was too infirm and advanced in years to engage in new undertakings.<sup>6</sup> You will perceive, therefore, that I had every previous disposition to give the best reception in my power to Mr. Fenwick and his companions, whom I view as choice auxiliaries, conveyed hither by the special appointment of Providence to instruct and edify the young and the old, to extend our holy religion and preserve by their lessons the integrity of Catholic faith

The Rev. Mr. Angier has not yet joined his brethren in Kentucky. They were so indulgent as to leave him in this State, at my earnest request, to attend the congregation given in charge to him on his arrival here, till his presence in Kentucky became indispensable. He is exceedingly and deservedly beloved by his flock, and it will be gratifying to you to be informed that the rest of your brethren give equal satisfaction. At his first coming, Mr. Fenwick naturally wished to form his settlement in Maryland, where his property and family connections chiefly are situated. But after conferring together, and considering that the college at Georgetown, and the still more numerous one of St. Mary, erected in this city by the Society of Sulpician Priests, were amply sufficient for all the Catholic youths, who, in this and the neighbouring States, could afford to pay for a college education, Mr. Fenwick went to visit the State of Kentucky, and returned with the resolution of fixing himself there. Mr. Wilson will be of infinite advantage in promoting their joint views, and as long as my jurisdiction over that part of the Diocese of Baltimore lasts, nothing shall be wanting on my side to favour their object.<sup>7</sup>

The fact that this document was written when the mis-

<sup>6</sup> Father Short was dead at this time, and Father Thomas Plunkett, or Underhill, was provincial.

<sup>7</sup> Archives of the Dominican Master General, Rome, Codex XIII, 731.

understanding of which we shall speak in the following chapter, was at its height, emphasizes Bishop Carroll's esteem for those early fathers and the value he placed upon their labors. It could hardly have been otherwise, for the letters of Fenwick and Concanen reveal men of exceptional characters and extraordinary zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Scarcely less striking is the spirit of charity and love for others that stands out so clearly in all their correspondence. Indeed, a careful study of Cincinnati's first bishop shows a man of God almost like the vesture of Christ, without rent or seam. Doubtless it is for this reason that one looks in vain for a sign that the father of our American hierarchy ever changed his view of the founders of Saint Joseph's Province of Dominicans.

In those days there was little money in Kentucky. Practically all debts were paid in barter. Business and trade were carried on through the same medium. Nor could the holy man obtain assistance from abroad. Father Concanen had told him that he could expect nothing from Italy, where the people were overtaxed to repair the devastations left by the French revolutionists. In France and the countries subject to her sway all religious had been secularized. Neither England nor Ireland could afford help. Except in England, Father Fenwick had few, if any, friends or acquaintances. Thus, as the buildings he hoped to erect were costly (that is, for the time), he was often hard put to it in their construction and in meeting his obligations. Accordingly, March 1, 1807, he writes Bishop Carroll:

We are in possession of our house since December last, and are preparing materials for a Church and College, but can advance very slowly. Much time, patience and expense must be employed.

I find but little assistance from the Kentuckians more than good wishes; and I have no encouragement at all from any other state. I hope, my Lord, you will recommend our undertaking wherever you can with propriety. If I had an acquaintance or correspondence in New Orleans, I should not hesitate to recommend it there, or even in the West Indies. I must request the favour of your Lordship to forward the enclosed letter by the first opportunity. Your good advice will be always gratefully received and punctually attended to by me and confrères. Please to remember us in your good prayers.<sup>8</sup>

The same causes that made foreign temporal aid impossible, also stood in the way of obtaining even a more essential succor. Likely, indeed, the improbability of being able to procure brethren of his Order from the older provinces abroad was one of the reasons that caused Father Fenwick to turn his thoughts, from the start, to a college and novitiate. But his keen practical mind told him that priests to the manner born are more acceptable to the people; that the main hope of any Church is a native clergy; and that, therefore, his undertaking would meet with a fuller measure of success, if he established, from the outset, what he loved to designate as "a nursery to raise young plants in" for the American portion of the Lord's vineyard.

During all the trials—and they were many—that crossed his path in Kentucky, Father Fenwick's faith in the eventual success of his efforts, as it had been when obstacles beset him in England, was steadfast and unfaltering. Next to the grace of God, this was his chief asset. It must have been also an inspiration to those affiliated with him. Perhaps that he did succeed was in no small measure a reward from heaven for his faith and

<sup>8</sup> Fenwick, Springfield, Kentucky, to Carroll, Baltimore, March 1, 1807 (Baltimore Archives, Case 3, R 8).



patience. But the friar's humility was such that he seems at times not to have realized the progress he made. Writing to Father Concanen, he tells his friend again of the purchase of "a valuable plantation, two miles from Springfield, Washington County, Kentucky. It [has] five hundred acres of land, a tolerable good brick house, other convenient buildings, a good grist-mill, and a saw-mill, which are my main support."

We are actually united together [he continues], excepting Father Angier, whom I [left in] Maryland, at Bishop Carroll's request, to serve his congregation [until we] should want him here. He is to join us in two or three months. We shall then endeavour to lead a conventual life and conform to the spirit of the Order as far as possible. As yet we have not been able to do it properly, being much distracted with temporals, as well as with spirituals. We have much repairing and building to do, workmen constantly about us, and a numerous and extensive congregation to serve also, containing at least 2,300 souls. Our Church is about one and one-half miles from our house. One attends there every Sunday. The others go out, too, by turns to other distant parts of the congregation. We intend to commence teaching a few boys after Easter—about ten or twelve, or as many as we have room for in the house. I have two nephews with me and another young man, well disposed and destined for the Church. I expect two or three more such after Easter. . . . I see we may have subjects enough soon to fill a large noviceship, if we have but means to maintain them, and books to teach them by. Very few are able to pay anything.

The Catholics in this State are pious, fervent and fond of instruction, but very poor in money. There are many good, pious girls and women well disposed to become nuns, if I had but the means to provide for them, and *one* or *two* to form them. However, I have a plan in contemplation for them, and hope Almighty God will enable me to execute it. I have established the devotion of the Rosary, [and] have it said three times every Sunday in public at the chapel—before Mass, when I give Catechism and

instructions, and after I preach a sermon, which generally keeps us at Church till two, three, and sometimes four o'clock. I must beg of your Reverence to give me some instructions on the Rosary and on our Tierce or Third Order, for I really am ignorant, and know not how to instruct well those who wish to be admitted. I wish to know the particular privileges and indulgences, also the obligations and conditions requisite in the members of it. I think the Third Order, if I understand it well, might be established with benefit to the pious people, and much to the honour of Our Lord. We want very much books of the Order and classics. Father Tournon's *Histoire des Hommes Illustres* would be highly useful to us. . . .

P.S. Paintings for Church and Convent, missals and breviaries and diurnals we want and shall want still more, also relics and pictures. As to money, you see, I need not mention [it]. Thus, dear and Rev. Sir, you see I am not backward in letting you know our wants, and trust you will relieve them as far as [is] in your power. You are no doubt well aware of the difficulties and expense that have already, and must further attend our undertaking. I hope you will at least pray hard for us, that He who inspired the plan and resolution, will enable us to carry it into execution. I moreover earnestly solicit the donations of all liberal and zealous souls, which will be received by Messrs. Wright and Company, London, Bishop Carroll, Baltimore, and the Cashier of the Bank of Columbia, Georgetown, Maryland.<sup>9</sup>

Under the impulse which Father Fenwick, humble though he was and possessed of but little means, knew so well how to communicate to the laborers whom his simple candor and magnetic personality had gathered around him, work on the convent and college went apace. Indeed, as may be seen from his letters, the building was completed, no doubt to his joy, much sooner than was expected. Of all this the grateful friar sought to keep his friend, Father Concanen, informed; but his letters

<sup>9</sup> Fenwick, Springfield, Kentucky, to Concanen, Rome, March 3, 1807 (Archives of the Dominican Master General, Codex XIII, 731).

either miscarried, or have since been lost. Fortunately, one bearing the date of July 10, 1808, has been preserved, and contains important dates and data of which we should otherwise have been deprived.<sup>10</sup>

From this source we learn that the new convent rose with extraordinary rapidity, for those days, and that it was occupied, though perhaps not yet completed, by the three fathers on the feast of Saint Joseph, March 19, 1807. The rite of dedication was performed according to the form prescribed by the constitutions of their Order, and, as far as the number of brethren permitted, with all the pomp and ceremonial special to such occasions. The people who gathered from all directions to witness the blessing, were both impressed and edified. As to the original Waller home, so to the new building was given the name of Saint Rose. But it was not merely a convent that had been erected. It was also a college, primarily intended for the preparation of boys and young men desirous of entering the ecclesiastical state. An institution for the education of youth generally was to follow as soon as circumstances permitted. So, also, that portion of the structure set aside for aspirants to the Order was soon made ready for its apostolic work. Of this Father Fenwick writes:

In May, 1807, we opened a small nursery for our future Convent, and received twelve boys of my own choice (two of my nephews), at the rate of one hundred dollars *per annum*, and ten poor boys gratis (of Kentucky), who had a tolerable country education. They have made much progress in Latin, as we applied chiefly to that for the first year, are well grounded in [the] rudiments and syntax, can read and explain tolerably well, are now all postulants. Six of them are verbally received, and will

<sup>10</sup> Fenwick, Lexington, Kentucky, to Concanen, Rome, July 10, 1808 (Archives of the Dominican Master General, Codex XIII, 731).

be solemnly admitted to the habit and novitiate on St. Rose's day, in August next. Those six postulants are from fifteen to nineteen years of age, and will be capable, [after] twelve months more, of teaching in our new College, which we hope to open about that time. The six others are younger and less advanced, though will, I trust, turn out as well.

We count 2,300 souls in our Congregation. The Chapel of the Congregation is under the patronage of St. Ann, about two miles from us, where one of us serves every Sunday and holy-day. The rest of the Congregation is divided in three parts, where one always serves. When our new Church is finished, we shall divide the Congregation between St. Ann and St. Rose. I hope later to have another Chapel under the protection of St. Joseph. Thus you see, Rev. and dear Father, we have a fair prospect before us. We only want money and numbers to make us more respectable in the country, and to ensure the predominance of our holy Religion, and even of our holy Order.<sup>11</sup>

The old log chapel of Saint Ann had served its purpose well, but it had now become too small for the growing congregation. Thus, now that the school was in operation, and the home for the fathers and the boys completed, the superior directed his energies towards the erection of a house of prayer, not only more commodious and suitable to divine service, but less inconvenient for the people, because situated nearer the center of the settlement. Accordingly, preparations were begun at once for a brick structure one hundred feet in length by forty in width. It was to be the "first in the State." The fathers hoped to make it the "equal to any in America, except the Cathedral of Baltimore," then in course of construction.

Although work on the building went apace, Father Fenwick had ceased to be superior before its completion. However, it was he who planned and began it. It was

<sup>11</sup> See note 10.



only proper, therefore, that he should be given the honor and the happiness of laying the corner-stone. In this connection he writes:

With the co-operation of the people in our Congregation, both Catholics and Protestants, we made and burnt, last year, 360,000 bricks for the purpose of building a Church to the honor of St. Rose, as our desire is to have the Church under her patronage, and the College [that is, the purely secular college], when built, under the patronage of St. Thomas Aquinas. On 24 May last, the translation of St. Dominic, I laid the foundation stone of said Church, with great solemnity and a concourse of people, surprised and edified: which work is now going prosperously on, and will be covered in and complete, as to the outside, by November next.<sup>12</sup>

Although the holy priest's humility prevented him from realizing the wisdom with which nature had endowed him, the plans of the fathers had prospered under his guidance beyond expectation. But in October, 1807, to his no little gratification, Fenwick was at last permitted to surrender the reins of authority into the hands of another. And in this connection, a well defined tradition in the province of Dominicans that he established, deserves mention as indicative of the friar's exalted virtue and of the esteem in which he was held at Rome. It tells us that the Superior General's letters patent appointing Father Wilson provincial were accompanied by others permitting Fenwick to annul them and nominating him to that honorable position, in case he chose to accept such a dignity. But he did not hesitate to divest himself of all honor in order to be more like to the meek and humble Saviour.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See note 10.

<sup>13</sup> This fact elicited one of the highest tributes paid the holy bishop by the writer of his obituary in the *Catholic Telegraph*, II, 85-86.

Prior to this, he had given proof of a special talent for the missionary field, in which he was not merely to acquire an enviable name, but to accomplish untold good for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls. This, indeed, was a sphere of labor for which he longed, both because it was congenial to his zeal, and because one of the prime objects which Saint Dominic had in mind in the establishment of his Order was that its members might carry the grace of eternal life to sinners, and bring unbelievers into the fold of Christ.

Thus far we have quoted documents with a view to show the characters of Fenwick and his companions, and to lay before the reader their efforts to establish a province of their Order in the United States, rather than to give an idea of their apostolic ministry. The period we have covered, was one of preparation. Naturally, therefore, their correspondence, both with Baltimore and with Rome, dealt somewhat exclusively with their building up and their hopes. They left it to Father Badin, then vicar general, to write of the missions.

Yet these same documents, we feel, cannot have failed to give the reader glimpses into the active life of these early friars sufficient to show their zeal for souls. No doubt it was to afford the Superior General and his Irish assistant some notion of the missionary field open to the new province, that Father Fenwick, in his letter of March 3, 1807, gives a lengthy description of Kentucky, together with its lack of religion, the vagaries of its many sects, and its tolerant attitude towards Catholicity. From such a description, he says, his friend "may form an idea of the great want of zealous missionaries and the great good that may be done in this widely extended continent."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See note 9.

Perhaps nothing in a priest's life demands so delicate a poise of judgment as the direction of the faithful in the sacred tribunal. Here he has to act the part at once of judge, to examine and pass juridical sentence; of father, to protect and save; of teacher, to instruct and guide; and of physician, to heal wounds festering in the soul. To combine these various offices so that they will act harmoniously for the spiritual advantage of the penitent; deftly to lead the good to a higher degree of perfection, without engendering scrupulosity; to enkindle fervor in the hearts of the tepid; to arouse in the hardened sinner, not despair, but fear and hatred of evil and love of God: all this demands extraordinary tact and consummate skill—the more so, when, as often happens, the number of confessions makes it impossible to give more than a few minutes to each individual. Gentleness and sympathetic kindness, rather than severity, must be the confessor's guiding rule. Harshness, never. He must take people, not as he would have them to be, but as he finds them, sweetly striving to make them better. Nor must he forget that all are not called to the same degree of goodness. For some he may advise obedience to the counsels. With others he must rest content if they follow the precepts.

There can be no doubt that the paternal spirit shown by the early Dominicans of Kentucky in the administration of the sacraments, and their kindly, genteel manner, had much to do with the reception accorded them by the people. Indeed, from the time the fathers first arrived there, the faithful, hungering for spiritual food, and anxious to make their peace with God, flocked to them from far and wide, as to ambassadors of Christ whom they understood, and who understood them. This

may be gathered even from the letters of Fathers Badin and Nerinckx to Bishop Carroll.

To the same prelate Father Fenwick says: "We are everywhere followed and pestered for confession. Many have not been [to confession] for three, four, eight and twelve years." In the same letter he tells his bishop: "We are all three of us here, zealously and actively employed in missionary duties, wherever called for, though there is constant occupation for us in our own Congregation of St. Ann." In another he says: "We are at present busily employed in missionary duties, constantly travelling about from one settlement or Congregation to another, or else confined by the multitude of poor, distracted people that surround us for confession, etc. Many, many have not received any sacrament since they left the old State."<sup>15</sup>

But from the time the college was opened, the apostolic labors of Fathers Wilson and Tuite were confined practically to the parish of Saint Rose. Their duties and obligations, as teachers, did not permit them to go out to the other missions. Their flock, however, comprised perhaps nearly a third of the Catholics in the state. Besides, people belonging to the charges of the other priests came in numbers, even from great distances, for the spiritual ministrations of the friars. Father Fenwick, because it was his duty, and expected by Bishop Carroll, still gave his thoughts and toils, for a time, principally to his convent and the congregation attached to it. Withal he frequently visited other parts of the state. He had already begun the life of an itinerant missionary and those apostolic labors than which

<sup>15</sup> Fenwick, Scott County, Kentucky, to Carroll, Baltimore (Baltimore Archives, Case 3, R 11). See note 2.



the Church of the mid-West has seen none more faithful, more self-sacrificing, more zealous, more unremitting, or richer in fruit.

To those acquainted with the history of Kentucky the marvel is that these early friars accomplished so much, rather than that they did not do more. But of this we shall speak later.

## CHAPTER VIII

### AN UNPLEASANTNESS

WE must now, much to our regret, discuss at some length the unpleasantness between these early Dominicans and Fathers Badin and Nerinckx, to which reference has been made in previous chapters. Of itself, the misunderstanding deserves no more than a casual reference in the life of the first bishop of Cincinnati. But unfortunately the author of the first biography of Rev. Charles Nerinckx has made a mountain out of the affair.

Nor is this all. Following the one-sided presentation of the case found in the letters of Fathers Badin and Nerinckx, that biographer not only gives his readers to understand that the blame for the troubles which those two zealous priests experienced in Kentucky, is largely to be laid at the door of Bishop Fenwick and his companions in religion, but also insinuates that the charges of officiousness, of want of zeal and of laxity, both religious and ministerial, may justly be imputed to them.<sup>1</sup> For forty years, this unfair and injurious representa-

<sup>1</sup> MAES, *Life of Rev. Charles Nerinckx*, pp. 160-184.—Father Maes, when writing of this unpleasantness, is singularly unfair to those early Dominicans. Parts of Father Nerinckx's letters that are essential to show their extravagance and inner spirit, are left out of the translations. In some places, words and even phrases are omitted or added (still they are in quotation marks), without any indication of such tampering; or are so changed as materially to affect the sense of the originals, to make them the more plausible, and to render them the more telling against the missionary's imaginary enemies. Designedly do we call them imaginary, for a careful perusal of the documents in the case seems to show them to have been largely such. In some instances Father Maes makes the documents practically his own. For Father Nerinckx's original letters see *The Catholic Historical Review*, VI, 74 ff.

tion of the unpleasantness has gone its rounds, receiving all too wide a credence and tarnishing the fair names of men who have deserved well of the American Church. Under these circumstances, we feel constrained, much as we dislike to do so, to devote an entire chapter to an incident in the bishop's life which, otherwise, we should have honored merely with a passing notice.

The reader has seen how Bishop Carroll sent the friars to Kentucky in response to the appeals of the people for spiritual succor; how they religiously bowed to the wishes of their ordinary; how Father Badin not only received their superior, Father Fenwick, with open arms on his visit to the state in the spring of 1805, but wrote to Bishop Carroll (May 15, 1805), begging for permission to join the Dominicans and to turn over the church lands to their Order; and how Father Fenwick, on his return to Maryland, sent Fathers Samuel T. Wilson and William R. Tuite to the mission ahead of himself and Rev. Robert A. Angier. The two friars started for the west about the middle of October. In the meantime, July 18, 1805, Father Nerinckx arrived in Kentucky. That indefatigable missionary, as a later page will show, brought from his native Belgium a strong prejudice against the English Dominicans of Bornheim which he had imbibed on mere hearsay. He knew none of them. In Kentucky, an intimate friendship soon arose between him and Father Badin. Nor was the new missionary slow to instill his bias into the mind of his friend.

It was clearly under this influence that the French missionary, October 5-12, 1805, just a few days before Fathers Wilson and Tuite started on their journey to Kentucky, wrote to Bishop Carroll a letter which is a complete travesty of what he had written to the same

prelate in the previous May. Meanwhile he had seen no Dominican. Yet all is now changed. The missionary has turned a complete somersault of both mind and heart. It would now be not only unwise, but dangerous and uncanonical, to confer upon the friars the woodlands belonging to the Church in Kentucky. The reasoning and canon law which he adduces for the change must have provoked the venerable prelate to a smile. Five months before, a religious order was Kentucky's great need. Now an order would be no little danger to its Church.<sup>2</sup>

Bishop Carroll, it seems quite certain, was not at all pleased with Father Badin's curious and uncharitable letter announcing his change of mind. At least, another letter from the same missionary, written more than six months afterwards, is proof positive that the venerable prelate never answered it, or even acknowledged its receipt.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Father Badin goes so far in this document (October 5-12, 1805) as to tell his ordinary that Father Nerinckx "does strongly suspect the purity of their [the Dominicans'] faith." This was in consequence of the preconceived prejudices of which we have spoken. Then we read: "He is so much disheartened at the thought of becoming partaker with them in the sacred ministry, that he spoke with resolution of his leaving the State, if the Dominicans trouble themselves otherwise than with a college." But it should be noted

<sup>2</sup> This document has two parts. One is dated October 5, the other October 12, 1805. By an oversight, it has been indexed as two letters, and placed under G 10 and G 11, Case 1 of the Baltimore Archives. It is printed, again as two documents, but with a notable omission, in the *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society*, XXIII, 166-74. It is given in full in *The Catholic Historical Review*, VI, 68-73.

<sup>3</sup> Badin to Bishop Carroll, May 28, 1806 (Baltimore Archives, Case A Special, L 14).



in this connection that, although Bishop Carroll did not even acknowledge the receipt of this letter, he took occasion of a later one from the same source to justify the fathers, and to assure the other missionaries of their untainted faith and righteousness.<sup>4</sup>

Such was the bias which the Dominicans encountered in Kentucky. In view of it, one might expect almost any action or statement on the part of the two clergymen who had preceded them. Father Wilson tells us that, on his and Father Tuite's arrival, the people were publicly warned against them. Although Father Nerinckx had signified his intention of leaving the missions, should these friars undertake any ministerial labors, hardly have Wilson and Tuite set foot in the state when he begins to belittle their zeal and to accuse them of refusing to bear the heat and the burden of the day, of seeking an easy life, and of caring little for the salvation of souls. He declares that, according to their own words, none of them intend to toil on the missions, that their only object seems to be to extend their own Order, and that, therefore, their presence in Kentucky will be of scant benefit to its Church.<sup>5</sup>

But in view of the fact that it was Father Fenwick's positive intention that some of his confrères should labor on the missions, and that, as has been seen from his own words, one of his prime objects in the establishment of the new province of Dominicans was to raise up missionaries for the country, it seems most improbable that any of the friars ever gave the Flemish clergyman the in-

<sup>4</sup> Badin to Carroll as in the preceding note.

<sup>5</sup> Father Wilson to Bishop Carroll, August 25, 1806 (Baltimore Archives, Case 8 B, L 6); Nerinckx to same, February 6, 1806 (*ibid.*, Case 8 A, U 2); Nerinckx to Joseph Peemans, Louvain (?), as quoted by Peemans in an account of the missions of Kentucky for the Propaganda (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. III, ff. 235-260; MAES, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-69.

formation he claims to have received from them. Fathers Wilson and Tuite, the first to arrive in Kentucky, were specially designed to teach in the college and novitiate which they proposed founding. This, if anything, must have been what they told Father Nerinckx, and their words were doubtless magnified into the sweeping assertions found in his letters. Nor must we forget that, even after the arrival of Bishop Flaget and the days of a more plentiful supply of priests, the Friars Preacher continued to devote themselves to apostolic labors to such an extent as greatly to interfere with the welfare of their college and convent. All this, together with their well-known fruitful zeal, their spirit of self-sacrifice, their privations for Christ's sake, and the documents already laid before the reader, proves beyond question how groundless and gratuitous are Father Nerinckx's declarations.

Not in a single line of his early letters—and they are many—does the zealous Belgian missionary (for truly zealous he was) speak a kind word of the friars. It is, therefore, passing strange to see the author of Father Nerinckx's first life, with the documents before him—he cites none to prove the statement—write: "Fathers Badin and Nerinckx had hailed their advent with genuine delight, and gave unsparing and oft-repeated praise to these new co-laborers."<sup>6</sup> Withal, it is worthy of note that, if Fenwick's apostolic labors were placed on one scale-pan of a balance, and those of Nerinckx on the other, great and fruitful as these latter surely were, those versed in the ecclesiastical history of Kentucky and Ohio cannot doubt but that the beam would tip in the friar's favor.

<sup>6</sup> MAES, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

Many things conspired with Father Nerinckx's pre-conceived prejudices to intensify his dislike for the fathers after their arrival in Kentucky. The Rev. Walter H. Hill, S.J., in a letter to the Hon. Ben. J. Webb, observes: "Some one writes to me, speaking of Father Nerinckx and the Dominicans: 'Father Nerinckx, with all his humility, was too sensitive.'"<sup>7</sup> So he was. No sooner had the fathers arrived in Kentucky than the people, because of the undue rigor to which they were subjected by the other missionaries, flocked to them from far and wide for the reception of the sacraments. This, as may be seen from his own letters, Father Nerinckx, pious as he was, could not bear with equanimity; nor can there be any doubt but that his pique added poignancy to his pen.<sup>8</sup>

So, too, as Father Hill further remarks, the good priest's notorious letter of June 30, 1808, shows that he was deeply offended by the loss of Saint Ann's Parish, the largest in the state, to the Dominicans. But this was through no fault of theirs. Although he had been in charge of Saint Ann's hardly a year when it was placed under the care of Father Wilson by the vicar general, Father Badin, possibly by Bishop Carroll himself, it

<sup>7</sup> Rev. Walter H. Hill, S.J., Saint Louis, to Hon. Ben. Webb, July 9, 1880 (Archives of Saint Joseph's Province).

<sup>8</sup> The way in which Maes (*op. cit.*, p. 172) attempts to explain the popularity of the Dominicans in Kentucky, reminds one strikingly of Prescott's elucidations of the Church's influence on the faithful. "Drawn [he says] by the novel ceremonial of the Dominican Order, and its picturesque dress, which, as experience teaches, are powerful attractions in the eyes of people unused to such interesting displays, the Catholics flocked to them from far and wide." Maes' un-Catholic bit of philosophy, however, falls quite flat, when it is recalled that the people began to "flock" to the fathers when there were only two of them (Wilson and Tuite) in the state, and while these lived miles apart. Surely there was then little chance for "display" of "novel ceremonial," etc. The true explanation of the friars' popularity is the more orthodox and kindlier ministrations which the people received at their hands.

was Father Nerinckx's favorite of all the missions. His chagrin, it may have been, was all the greater because he was thus thwarted in the plan which he had conceived of erecting a brick church in this settlement.<sup>9</sup>

Father Badin was a Frenchman; Father Nerinckx a Belgian. Three of the Dominicans were British. The other was an American; but he was of English origin, and had spent the greater part of his life abroad with Englishmen. Nearly all the people in Kentucky were Americans, but of English descent. Now experience and history both teach us that different nationalities are often as so many misfitting cogs that prevent even the mill of Christ from running smoothly. This is why we have had friction in church circles through all the country, where foreigners have gathered in sufficient numbers to give play to national prejudices. Documents leave no room for doubt that such an influence had its part in the disagreement of which we speak.

Father Nerinckx's letters show that with his love of God he joined an intense attachment to his countrymen. This led to the desire of surrounding himself with clergymen from his native land, and caused him to conceive the plan of making at least a part of Kentucky a mission principally, if not entirely, in charge of Belgian priests.<sup>10</sup> One cannot in reason blame him for so laudable an aim. But when he suffered himself, as he certainly did, to be so incensed at the Dominicans whose presence was an obstacle to his purpose, as to decry them in all manner of ways, he cannot be freed from censure.

<sup>9</sup> Father Nerinckx to Bishop Carroll, June 30, 1808 (Baltimore Archives, Case 8 A, U 5).—Though Saint Ann's was still under Father Nerinckx's jurisdiction, it was attended by Father Wilson from early in 1806. It was permanently assigned to the Dominicans in the summer of that year.

<sup>10</sup> This is evident from many of Nerinckx's letters, from Peemans' account to the Propaganda, and from Maes' life.



This is all the more true because these friars had gone to Kentucky at the earnest solicitation of Bishop Carroll, who had promised them to that desolate part of his diocese before Father Nerinckx arrived in America.

It was for this reason that we said on a previous page, when speaking of Fathers Caestryck, Stordeur and Meerts: "That they did not enlist in the undertaking is the more to be regretted, because, in addition to the good they could have accomplished for the American Church, their Belgian origin might have secured the little band of Friars Preacher a more cordial and charitable reception than was accorded them on their arrival in Kentucky, and made their way smoother." Certainly these Flemish fathers would have found there a field of labor worthy of their zeal.

Possibly the most insidious, crafty and disloyal heresy the Church has had to combat was that of Jansenism, so named from Cornelius Jansen, bishop of Ypres. It taught that Christ died for only the elect, whose salvation alone He willed; and that nothing good done by the reprobate—it held positive reprobation—can avail them aught in the way of eternal life. One can readily see to what excesses these teachings opened the door. In a word, Jansenism was Puritanic in spirit, and savored much of the arid and levelling doctrines of Calvinism. Like Gallicanism, it sought to restrain the Pope's authority over the Church in favor of the bishops and temporal rulers. The adherents of this sect looked to the accidentals of religion rather than to the essentials. In practice, they placed discipline—fasting, for instance, penance and mortification—before the life-giving sacraments of Christ. Thus, again, Jansenism was a species of Christian Pharisaism. Jansenists overlooked

the proper part of the heart and the feelings in worship, preached a discouraging rigorism which they adorned with the names of virtue and austerity, and denounced as laxists all who did not subscribe to their gloomy and austere views. Their principles, quite naturally, led to extreme severity in their moral doctrine and in the administration of the sacraments.

Although the doctrines of Jansenism were condemned time and again, its followers long held their ground, without renouncing their errors. This they did through chicane and by pretence of following the practices of primitive Christianity, of remaining Catholics and of belonging to the Church, in spite of the Church. Their support of the absolutist theories of the times won them the favor of statesmen, while the cloak of austerity with which they covered their teachings, as is ever the case, appealed to many of the faithful with ascetic temperaments. In this way, even the leaven of true Catholic doctrine eventually became tainted with the poison. Confession and communion, the great channels of grace instituted by Christ for salvation, were administered with such severity as to cause them to be woefully neglected. There were, it is true, many holy persons who were imbued with the spirit of Jansenism. But their errors were through no fault of their own, for they imbibed them in spite of themselves. They were in good faith. Withal had not the Church been divine, Jansenism would have dealt her a death-blow.

As Father Maes correctly states, it cannot be denied that the French and Belgian clergy of the eighteenth century "were considerably tainted by the Jansenistic teaching;" and that the "bitter fruits" of this may still be seen in the neglect of the sacraments by the people

and the severity of the priests in the sacred tribunal. Through no fault of theirs, Fathers Badin and Nerinckx had heard this doctrine preached from the pulpit, had found it in their books, had been taught it in the seminary. The Belgian clergyman had practiced it in his ministerial duties at home for twenty years before coming to the New World.<sup>11</sup>

These Puritanic principles and exaggerated notions of severe morality they brought to America. In Kentucky their zeal led them to practice the same severity of discipline, and the same rigorism both in preaching and in the administration of the sacraments to which they had been accustomed abroad, but which were totally unsuited to the greater portion of the Anglo-Saxon New World. The older Catholics of Kentucky had not been used to such extremes in Maryland; and the younger did not always take kindly to them. For this reason, even before the arrival of Father Nerinckx, the French missionary was rather disliked than liked. As may be seen, not only from the letters of the Dominicans to Bishop Carroll, but also from those of the other two priests, many persons seldom approached the sacraments; some never. When Father Nerinckx, stern and unbending by nature, came to the state, his influence seems to have induced his companion to become more rigorous and severe than ever.

Father Nerinckx possessed a calm demeanor, had a quiet, even way, and was of serious bearing. This, together with his zeal, piety and personal austerity, made his ministrations more acceptable to the faithful than were those of Father Badin. By many, especially those of an ascetic temperament, the former was loved and

<sup>11</sup> MAES, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-170.

admired as a spiritual guide. The latter, as is admitted, was vivacious and changeable, and given to harsh, cutting language. He had not a judicial temperament. Often he was imprudent. Withal, he was not less zealous than his friend. It would seem that his desire to emulate the Belgian missionary increased his stringent measures, and brought about that discontent which, when it was rumored that he would likely be chosen for the proposed diocese of Kentucky, led to many complaints against him to Bishop Carroll. But before this, Father Nerinckx had begun to write bitter things against the Dominicans to the same prelate. Father Badin soon followed suit. However, as the documents in the archives of Baltimore are both numerous and long, we can do no more here than select four, two from each missionary, which suffice to give a fair idea of their correspondence in this matter.<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, Father Nerinckx's letters of June 2, 1806, and June 30, 1808, are so harsh, so reproachful alike of the Dominicans and the people, and so full of invective that, unless we knew otherwise from his contemporaries, they would convict him of no little conceit, and shatter one's belief in his humility, piety, charity and spirit of mortification. As it is, they prove that his judgment was often at fault, that he was sensitive in the extreme, and that he gave too ready an ear to idle gossip. His determination to gain his point led him to employ language that was not only harsh and extravagant, but even violent. If the missionary's letters are any index to his dealings with the faithful, his ministrations could not have been otherwise than very distasteful to the

<sup>12</sup> The letters of Fathers Badin and Nerinckx to Bishop Carroll that touch on this topic, would make a portly volume. They run from 1805 to 1810, and are found in various cases of the diocesan archives of Baltimore.



greater number. In short, an ultra rigorist spirit shines out on every page. To those who have seen the original documents and are acquainted with traditions still living in Kentucky, there can be no doubt as to the correctness of the statements which Father Wilson, writing on a pastoral matter, makes to Bishop Carroll.

No place in the world, dear Sir [he says], is more in want of a prudent Bishop than Kentucky, where thousands are living in constant neglect of the Sacraments, through the too great zeal, I fear, of the former missionaries. Young people are not admitted to them without a solemn promise of not dancing *on any occasion whatever*, which few will promise, and fewer still can keep. All priests that allow of dancing are publicly condemned to hell. . . . People taught that every kiss lip to lip between married persons is a mortal sin. . . . Women refused absolution for their husbands permitting a decent dance in their house—not to mention a thousand things far more ridiculously severe.<sup>13</sup>

Owing to their length, we can only touch on the more salient points of the two letters of Father Nerinckx selected for discussion. In that of June 2, 1806, he says that Father Badin must now admit that he has seen the realization of his (Nerinckx's) prophecy in regard to the Dominicans. They differ much from Badin in speculative theology, and wholly in some points of practice. Father Nerinckx knows not how much it is expedient to say; yet he can positively assert that: "Perhaps they will multiply the nation; but they will neither increase the joy nor renew the face of the earth." The wanton grow more insolent. Those who had been held in check by fear, if not by love, now that the lines are loosened, rush forth with stiffened necks, boasting that they have discovered the city of refuge. The other

<sup>13</sup> The date of this letter is August 25, 1806 (Baltimore Archives, as in note 5).

friars (Fenwick and Angier) "are expected to bring plenary indulgences that will not only remit penalties due to sin already forgiven, but prevent the incurring of guilt at all."<sup>14</sup>

Father Tuite, he says, though less learned than his colleague, appears to be more given to discipline. The other (Father Wilson) appears to be a man of great learning; but his learning "has led him, not to madness, but to a laxity which, for want of the flavor of salt, may perhaps be called infatuation." "Father Badin terms him a laxist; the people call him easy. Whether he should be placed among the extreme laxists I do not wish to be the judge. I am considered a rigorist; Father Badin both more rigorous and harsher." Father Nerinckx, however, seemed quite unable to realize that his practice was at all harsh or stinging.

Before his arrival in Kentucky, the missionary proceeds to say, Father Badin's discipline in regard to matrimony had been the occasion of much complaint and murmuring. But since Father Wilson's coming, he declares, everything in this matter is decided as if it concerned mere brutes, and without any regard whatever to the sacramental character and sanctity of the married state.<sup>15</sup>

Father Nerinckx does not believe that the Dominicans will succeed in founding a convent in Kentucky, as they are not willing to commence in an humble way; and he foresees that they will obtain but little financial

<sup>14</sup> Nerinckx to Carroll, June 2, 1806 (Baltimore Archives, Case 8 A, U 1).

<sup>15</sup> Here Father Nerinckx writes at considerable length, and in a manner that must be pronounced shocking. One of his expressions is: "Ab illius R[everendi] P[atris] adventu res matrimonialis . . . omnino pro votis equorum ac mulorum in parte carnali decisa est." Maes (*op. cit.*, p. 175) is guilty of considerable juggling in his rendition of this part of the missionary's letter.

aid from the people. Besides, he adds, "they are lovers of themselves, and are unduly terrified at the burden of the day and the heats." Should they, however, succeed in making a foundation, it is his earnest wish that some man imbued with the spirit of religious observance, and quickened with a zeal for souls, should be sent from another house of the Order, and placed in charge. For what real good, he continues, or what glory to religion, can be expected, if such men, far removed from a superior who can act as censor to their lives and as guardian of religious discipline, are placed over the people to form them to their own rule of life? "Be it far from me [he adds, however,] to say that they are bad; but I do think that they are animated with too little zeal for religious observance."

This is certainly a severe arraignment. Its only palliation is that Father Nerinckx had been made purblind by the influences of which we have spoken. Apart from every other reason, the very lives of these early Dominicans prove these extravagant statements and veiled accusations too absurd to be believed by even the most credulous. These early fathers had as many, if not more, hardships and privations to bear than the Flemish missionary; they bore them with greater humility and patience. Father Nerinckx asserts more than once that he writes as he does out of his love of God and zeal for souls. One almost wonders if this can be true; if his bitter words were not largely inspired by umbrage and disappointment at the loss of his favorite parish and at seeing the prospects of his proposed Belgian mission dwindle. Be that as it may, history, we think, must pronounce the fathers' zeal and love of God equal to his. Certainly the historian knows that Dominican theology

is rather severe than lax. It was for this reason that Father Concanen, when he heard of this accusation, took occasion to observe in writing to Archbishop Carroll:

I wish to be remembered to Father Fenwick and his companions at Kentucky. I am surprised at the controversy arisen between them and Rev. Mr. Badin. It is the first time I ever heard of the Dominicans being accused of lax doctrine. It must be that that worthy and zealous man, Mr. Badin, has poisoned his mind by reading Jansenistical authors; for surely the sweet and lenient spirit of the Church abhors equally the extremes of laxity and rigour.<sup>16</sup>

Under the circumstances, it was fortunate for the early Church of Kentucky that those friars had much of the tenderness of heart and kindly disposition characteristic of Saints Thomas of Aquin and Francis de Sales. Of Father Wilson, against whom these complaints were principally made, and whom Bishop Flaget called the shining light of his diocese, Bishop M. J. Spalding writes:

Of refined and highly polished manners, as well as amiable, modest and learned, he was universally admired and beloved. He was of retiring habits, and much devoted to prayer and study. He was one of the most learned divines who ever emigrated to America. . . . He died, in the same odour of sanctity in which he had lived, in the summer of 1824. Long and reverently will the Catholics of Kentucky remember his virtues, which are freshly embalmed in the recollection of his brethren. He was a bright ornament of an illustrious Order, and its early history in the United States is identified with his biography.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> This letter is dated Rome, August 9, 1809, and is in Baltimore Archives, Case 2, W 7.

<sup>17</sup> SPALDING, *Sketches of the Early Catholic Missions in Kentucky*, pp. 154-155.



Indeed, that distinguished theologian and scholar might have felt complimented at being considered in the same light that Saint Paul was considered by the pagan Festus, mad because of his learning. "Paul [said Festus], thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad. And Paul said: I am not mad, most excellent Festus, but I speak words of truth and soberness" (Acts, XXVI, 24-25). The letters of all these early friars show them to have been gentlemen, as well as possessed of truly priestly characters and scholarly attainments. In regard to their spirit of religious discipline and observance, of which the Belgian clergyman could have known nothing—for he refused to associate with them—no more need be said than that one marvels why he was so critical, when it is remembered that only two of them were then in Kentucky, and that they lived some twenty miles apart. Wilson was at Saint Ann's; Tuite near Bardstown. It is still more strange to find Father Nerinckx's biographer claiming that he had "formed a correct idea of the state of affairs at St. Rose's," when St. Rose's did not exist; and proving his contention by Bishop Spalding who states precisely the reverse of what Maes cites him to establish.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> MAES, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-76 (note).—This author here declares that Father Nerinckx gives "a correct idea of the state of affairs at St. Rose's." But, mark! This letter was written, June 2, 1806. Fenwick was still in Maryland. He purchased the farm on which Saint Rose's Convent stands, in July 1806, and got possession of it the following December. To prove his contention Nerinckx's biographer quotes a passage from Spalding's life of Bishop Flaget, page 288. Spalding, however, says that Father Muñoz was sent to Saint Rose's by the Order's General, in 1828, to "*re-establish*" a discipline that had existed there, but "had suffered some relaxation" through the "distracting cares of the missionary life." This is a far cry from what Maes would have the learned author say: that is, no discipline had ever existed at the place. Spalding was led into an error by some notes of Bishop Flaget. Muñoz was sent to Saint Rose's by Bishop Fenwick, not by the Father General. Neither was his mission, as will be seen, to re-establish discipline, but for reasons of which we shall speak in a future chapter.

A living, nay, an inspiriting tradition in the province of Dominicans which they established tells us that those early fathers were scrupulously exact in the duties of their state of life; and that they sought, even under the most adverse circumstances, to carry out the rules and constitutions of their Order. Owing to the fact that they wrote but seldom, and to the destructive agencies of time, we have few documents bearing directly on this subject. Fortunately, however, we have enough distinctly to establish the truth of this tradition. In 1816, for instance, the Master General writes to congratulate the little band of religious on their spirit of observance. Then, an extract, in Italian, from a letter of the provincial to Rev. John A. Hill gives us a very pretty and illumining account of their life, their studies and their labors on the missions. It informs us that their religious discipline and observance were all that could be desired. Community life, after the convent of Saint Rose had been established, was rigidly kept up in accordance with the rule. The divine office and the devotions of the institute were observed most religiously. The community frequently rose at midnight—never later than four in the morning. Common life was perfect. The beds were of hard straw. Even the canonical tonsure was worn by those not out on the missions; although, for prudence' sake, this practice was afterwards discontinued. Considering the trying labors and the circumstances of time and place, the Order's regulations for abstinence were perhaps followed too rigidly for the health of the community. The country was new and unsettled; eggs and butter, even vegetables, were scarce; fish almost an unknown luxury; cheese entirely so. Corn bread was the fathers' chief mainstay of life.

Their beverage for breakfast and supper was warm milk fresh from the cow; for dinner it was usually water.<sup>19</sup>

From the same document we learn that, owing to poverty, the students, and even the priests, had occasionally to do manual labor. Nevertheless, through economy in time, they managed to carry on classes regularly and to give the young men a good education. Most of them, in addition to the courses ordinarily given in seminaries, knew French and Italian. The fathers (that is, those not engaged in the college) did much missionary work. But the missions were a source of expense rather than of income to the institution. Indeed, they would have been happy had the missions brought in enough to supply the fathers engaged on them with the horses and secular clothing required for that purpose. The greatest drawback to the young province was its extreme indigence, which often made the life of its members quite trying. Yet this did not prevent them from performing all spiritual functions *gratis*. These things, however, observes the provincial, should not deter the new recruits from accompanying Father Hill to America; for they will still find food and clothing, and with these one should be content. Their labors will bear rich fruit.

Father Wilson's statement is confirmed by a letter of Father John A. Hill, O.P., who had just arrived from Rome itself. This document is dated, November 21, 1821, and is given in the London *Catholic Miscellany*, I, 327-328. He assures us that the diet of the little community was indeed "very plain," and their life "sufficiently austere." That they enjoyed good health, he

<sup>19</sup> Father Pius J. Gaddi, to Father Wilson, Rome, March 16, 1816 (Archives of Saint Joseph's Priory); Wilson, Kentucky, to Hill, Rome, July 23, 1820 (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. III, No. 138).

seems to insinuate, was a blessing from God who "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."

Having delivered the tirade which has been laid before the reader, Father Nerinckx proceeds to tell how he had formed an unfavorable opinion of the English Dominicans at Bornheim before he left for America, although he hardly knew them even by name. This impression he received from friends. And to give it the greater weight he assures Bishop Carroll that his informants were among the very best Catholics of Belgium—nay, precisely the men who have been so generous to the American missions. One of them went so far as to request him not to associate with the fathers going to America, should they be on the same boat as he. His friends had told him that, in the very midst of the persecution of all the clergymen who remained loyal to the Church, the fathers of Bornheim were able, God only knows how, to stalk abroad as freely as the unfaithful priests who had subscribed to the iniquitous civil constitution of the clergy. Furthermore, these Dominicans managed to buy back their confiscated property, using bonds of the revolutionary republic for that purpose. Father Wilson, he continues, was even elected to public office, was held in high esteem by the prefect of that department, and received the sons of the Church's persecutors into Holy Cross College of which he was president. These things, Father Nerinckx says he was informed, aroused a strong suspicion in the minds of all good Catholics that those friars were in at least tacit agreement with the tyrannical government. In Kentucky, he declares, Father Wilson had spoken in defense of the present deplorable state of the Church in France. For these reasons, the missionary cannot doubt but that



men of their stamp (*talis farinae*) should be handled with the greatest precaution. If they have not associated themselves with iniquity, they have at least become scandalously lax.

Father Nerinckx now comes to what is evidently the impelling motive behind his furious assault. It is to prevent the fathers from becoming the directors of Kentucky's future seminary, should they succeed in establishing themselves in the state. But if we may judge from their letters, his worry was without cause; for nothing seems to have been further from their minds. Perhaps he wished to see his fellow-countrymen, or those imbued with Jansenistic principles, in charge of this institution.<sup>20</sup>

We shall let Father Raymond Palmer tell of the conduct of the English friars in Belgium after the revolution. His sober words, besides offering an agreeable contrast to Father Nerinckx's violent declamation, bear the impress of truth and bring conviction.

After the French had established their government and peace was outwardly restored, some of the fathers in 1795 returned to Bornhem, but durst not openly settle themselves again in the convent. In 1796 the possessions of all religious bodies were declared national property and the sale of them was decreed. A commissaire sent to Bornhem valued the property at 24,806 livres: it so happened that five pieces of the best land escaped the man's notice and were not sequestered. As a compensation the directoire executif offered the fathers [because they were Englishmen] the amount in *bons* [that is, bonds], and although those notes were available only for government purposes and their

<sup>20</sup> Although the missionary expressly states in this document that he writes unasked ("*non rogatus quidem*"), Maes, at the end of his rendition of it, puts in the words (and in quotation marks, as if they were a translation): "I feel all the more free, my Lord, in writing to you as I have done, . . . since you expect me to look after the interests of Religion in this region" (MAES, *op. cit.*, p. 176). These last words are not in the letter.

value very precarious, the fathers took them as they were better than nothing.

The property was brought to auction in April and August, 1797, and the whole was sold to a perfumer of Antwerp for 13,894 livres more than the government valuation. This perfumer was the agent of the English fathers, and so the convent of Bornhem returned to the rightful owners. The government was paid with its *bons* with an additional sum of about £700. As soon as the fathers had the house back, they formed a small community there and opened the college again. The constitutional oath was tendered to them which they refused; but a trifling bribe offered in the most barefaced manner got over the difficulty. The meanest scoundrels stood at the head of affairs; some whom the fathers had known in the lowest circumstances had thrust themselves by unscrupulous conduct into public notice and held great preferments. . . .<sup>21</sup>

The convent, as Father Palmer informs us, could not again be opened as such. The people, unable to enter the church, gathered in the church-yard for their prayers. Doubtless the fathers, naturally less molested because they were Englishmen, cautiously administered to the sorrowing faithful. Thus they were a blessing rather than the scandal that Father Nerinckx would have us believe.

When Father Wilson, more than a year afterwards, heard of the accusations that had been made against him personally, he wrote to Bishop Carroll explaining his conduct in Belgium and his remarks in Kentucky, and offered to produce proof of his assertions. His explanation must have given the venerable prelate such satisfaction that he could now hardly have desired the proof, even had he wished it before. From the Dominican's letter we learn that his argument in Kentucky was

<sup>21</sup> PALMER, *Life and Times of Philip Thomas Howard, O.P.*, Cardinal of Norfolk, pp. 234-35.

to call Father Badin's attention to the difference between the accidentals of religion, or discipline, and the essentials or doctrine. This he did only to defend Pius VII, then so sorely tried by Napoleon Bonaparte, from accusations which the French missionary seemed disposed to lay at the door of the aged and distressed Pontiff. Of his relations with the French government at Bornheim the learned friar says simply that, at the request of the bishop, the parish priest of the town and several other clergymen, he accepted, about a year before his departure for America, the position of counsellor to the mayor of Bornheim, a young, scrupulous and inexperienced man. In this capacity he assisted at three meetings of the council, in which were discussed the question of the salaries "for the midwife of our parish" and "for the person who wound up the clock of the parish church, and such like trifles."<sup>22</sup> He did not mention the fact that the fathers could not wear their habits, and for a time were obliged to live in hiding; that they could not reopen their house as a convent; and that they were able to reopen their college was because religious institutes devoted to teaching had not been suppressed by the revolution. All this the bishop knew.

Father Wilson tells Bishop Carroll that he is so conscious of his innocence of the charges made against him, that he would not have written this letter, had he not been urged to do so by his brethren. But it should be noted in this connection, that Father Nerinckx's sources of information about the Dominicans at Bornheim, in his letter of June 30, 1808, seem to dwindle down to one man; and he is not sure whether it was the dead Mr. De Wolf of Antwerp, or the living Mr. Peemans of

<sup>22</sup> October 14, 1807 (Baltimore Archives, Case 8 B, L 7).

Louvain, who had told him the ugly things narrated in the document just discussed.

Shortly after writing this letter, Father Nerinckx refused longer to attend the mission of Holy Mary on the Rolling Fork, where he was not remunerated for his services.<sup>23</sup> Prior to this, he had thought of joining the Trappists who were then in Kentucky. But now his troubles seem to have turned his thoughts in this direction more seriously than ever. The following year, Bishop Carroll, writing at the request of Father Badin to dissuade him from such a purpose, took occasion to say:

Perhaps it [the inclination to join the Trappists] proceeds from the difference of opinion, and consequently of practice, betwixt you and some of your brother clergymen on certain points of morality. If such be the case, you have certainly recollected, that this happens everywhere, in all the countries, which I have been in. Often, the rectors of adjoining parishes have imbibed different principles. Each follows those which he approves the best, and as long as they are tolerated by the Church, he suffers his neighbour to pursue them, tho' he himself pursues a different course.<sup>24</sup>

In the meantime, it having been rumored that Father Badin would likely be appointed the first ordinary of Kentucky, complaints of the most emphatic character against that missionary's extreme harshness and severity began to arrive at Baltimore.<sup>25</sup> So matters wore along until June 30, 1808, when Father Nerinckx wrote to Bishop Carroll the letter of which we now speak. It is

<sup>23</sup> Father Wilson to Bishop Carroll, August 25, 1806, as in note 5; Father Badin to same, November 20, 1806 (Baltimore Archives, Case 1, H 6).

<sup>24</sup> Bishop Carroll to Father Nerinckx, April 12, 1807 (Baltimore Archives, Case 10, D 2); Father Badin to Bishop Carroll, February 17 and March 14, 1807 (*ibid.*, Case 1, I 1 and 3).

<sup>25</sup> These charges commenced to arrive in Baltimore late in 1807, and continued through a great part of 1808.



another outpouring of bitter invective against the friars and the people. In his opinion, things are going from bad to worse; and still more serious consequences are to be feared. He thus sums up his charges under four headings.

1°. The dissensions, arrogance and tumultuous impudence of the people of Kentucky began with the coming of the Dominicans. Why these fathers did not inquire on their arrival, as he had done, what virtues were to be implanted, and what vices eradicated, he cannot understand, unless their aim was either to please the people, or to advance their own interests. He doubts whether they have gained the first purpose; but in temporal matters they have met with fair success. They have done nothing for the common good of religion. Whatever they get, they apply to their house. The church of Saint Ann is in the same state in which he left it. Perhaps they intend to transfer it to Saint Rose's. He fears the same fate for the church which he had intended to erect in Springfield. Saint Ann's Congregation, when he had charge of it, was given to the cultivation of every virtue, and was the most exemplary in the state. But now, he *hears*, all this has passed like a shadow. Marriages with Protestants are contracted with the utmost facility. Dances are permitted in the day time, and are no sin. In Saint Ann's Parish, in Scott County, and on Simpson's Creek, where "the cat gut" electrifies the feet at that more comical than evangelical practice, dances and marriages always end in tumult. At times these fathers do some missionary work, but only when there is hope of gain. When there is nothing but labor in view, they claim to be religious only. Again, he would emphatically call them to a

stricter religious discipline, and have the General of the Dominicans send to Kentucky some men of his Order imbued with its spirit. Of course he means men imbued with Jansenistic views. But now Father Nerinckx is not sure whether it was from Mr. Peemans of Louvain, or Mr. De Wolfe ("of happy memory") of Antwerp, that he received the evil reports about the fathers at Bornheim, of which he had spoken in a previous letter.

In reply to the charges under this heading let it be said, first, that Father Nerinckx's own letters show that there had been troubles and loud complaints in Kentucky before the coming of the Dominicans. Of the fathers' zeal and self-sacrifice enough has been said to clear them from these renewed accusations of laxity, of selfishness, of want of religious observance. Of this latter the missionary could have known nothing, for the reason that he kept away from Saint Rose's. Nor is it anywhere stated that the friars made the same exactions on the purses of the people as the other two missionaries. Had they been grasping, it is hardly probable that they would have always been in such dire poverty. Maes' assertion (*op. cit.*, p. 173) that: "Many negligent Christians took a malign pleasure in going to the Dominicans and contributing more for their buildings than even the richest were asked to do for the support of their parish priests," is fiction pure and simple.

Secondly: it was quite natural that, in those days of few priests and much to do, Saint Ann's and Springfield, as neither place was more than two miles from Saint Rose's, should be merged into the latter parish. This was a matter of economy for the greater good. Father Nerinckx should have told the bishop this circumstance. So also should he have told him that Simp-

son's Creek was under Father Badin's care, not that of the Dominicans. And he should have added that, although the superior of the friars had sought to place Father Angier at Saint Francis', Scott County, in compliance with the bishop's request, Father Badin had so far thwarted this arrangement and attended the parish himself.<sup>26</sup>

Thirdly: real history tells us that, in spite of Father Nerinckx's statement, the Cartwright's Creek Settlement, for which Saint Ann's was built, was never more faithful to its religious duties, or in a better spiritual condition, than after it was placed under the administration of the Dominicans. To this day it remains one of the most exemplary parishes in the state. To this day a mixed marriage is almost unheard of in the congregation. As to the lawfulness of decent dances the Church, through her theologians, speaks for herself.

2°. Under this heading the good man turns his attention to Basil Elder of Baltimore. There lives in your town, he says, a crafty, contemptible fellow. His name is Basil Elder, but it should be Basilisk; that is, a fabled serpent whose very breath was fatal. (*Est apud vos versepellis quidam de grege homuncio, Basilus, melius Basiliscus, Elder.*) He has emitted his poison even unto these parts. Through his letters, which are handed about to be publicly read (but Father Nerinckx *has not seen any of them*), he has, though "unprovoked by me, heaped insult and injury upon me," until he is held in contempt by all good people and even by the more honest Protestants. "I forgive him from my heart [he continues], for I admit in him the crassest and most

<sup>26</sup> Badin's interference with the bishop's arrangements for Saint Francis's Parish may be seen in several letters of the day, including some of his own. His officiousness in the matter eventually aroused the venerable prelate's wrath.

stupid ignorance. . . . He who wrote that list of accusations is a brute rather than a man. . . . I most sincerely believe (*sincerissime judico*) such a man utterly unworthy of any sacrament, until it is established beyond all doubt that he has repaired the scandal given. That sneak (*ille tenebrius*) boasts that he has the approbation and endorsement of your Lordship for all, or nearly all, that he says." Father Nerinckx doubts not that this assertion is gratuitous and mendacious. Should it be true, however, and should Elder's letters contain what they *are said* to contain, the missionary does not see how the affair can be remedied, unless the last chapter of the Book of Esther suggest a way.<sup>27</sup>

Doubtless the reader has noticed the extravagance and the lack of charity in this language. They become the more patent, when it is remembered that Basil Elder was an exemplary Catholic and the father of the late saintly Archbishop Elder of Cincinnati. Webb informs us that he was trusted, admired and beloved as a friend by the first seven archbishops of Baltimore.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> In his rendition of this part of Father Nerinckx's letter Maes (*op. cit.*, p. 178) substitutes "B—— E——" for Basil Elder. "B—— E——" is also made the instigator of the complaints, for which there is no evidence. The most opprobrious epithets applied to Elder by Father Nerinckx are suppressed, and the bitterness of the attack further toned down by dividing the paragraph, and putting a part of it on page 181: "*Tali dedicatore,*" etc. Basil Elder's identity is still further disguised by a footnote (*op. cit.*, p. 181), which represents him as a Kentuckian who "was in Baltimore at the time, and had had an interview with the Bishop." But Father Badin's letters, as well as the present document, with its "*apud vos,*" leave no doubt as to who "B—— E——" was, or as to where he lived. The name Basil Elder, although given in full by Father Nerinckx, is again rendered "B—— E——" by the same author, *op. cit.*, p. 180, No. 10 of the accusations against the missionary. Still again (*op. cit.*, p. 186), we find Father Anthony Sedella given as "Anthony ——." One wonders why all this suppression of the identity of others, whilst the Dominicans are brought out so prominently. The answer to this question we leave to the reader.

<sup>28</sup> WEBB, *op. cit.*, p. 123. See also the *New York Freeman's Journal*, October 23, 1869, and *Character Glimpses of the Most Rev. William Henry Elder*, pp. 11 ff.



Basil Elder's relations lived in the Cox's Creek Settlement, now Fairfield, Nelson County. And it was from this section that the greater number, as well as the most damaging, of the complaints were sent to Baltimore against Father Badin who was in charge of this mission. From this it will be seen how unfair and groundless is the following imputation by Father Maes (*op. cit.*, pp. 176-77): "It was especially in these places [that is, in Springfield and Saint Ann's Parish], where his [Father Nerinckx's] influence was no longer felt, that his enemies exerted themselves in the most shameless manner to destroy whatever good he had effected; the Dominicans holding themselves aloof, or being perhaps unable to counteract the evil influences of these rebels."<sup>29</sup>

3°. Under the third heading of his letter Father Nerinckx gives us a list of the accusations against him. As far as he can find out from what has been said or written, and from an examination of his own conscience, these are, he says:

1. I insist on the people rising at four A.M. Rev. Father Fenwick is my accuser on this head, and that is the hour which he himself should keep. But he is deceived when he says that I deny absolution to those who sleep longer. If he knew what the Jesuit Fathers introduced in Paraguay, and the devotions practiced in Belgium, he would say mass at four A.M. for the negro slaves. 2. I promiscuously forbid dances as bad. 3. I prohibit promiscuous visiting between persons of different sexes. 4. I forbid and am opposed to marriages with heretics, etc. 5. Before

<sup>29</sup> We have found only one person in Saint Rose's Congregation writing against Father Badin. This was in 1808, and the complaint was about that priest's actions in regard to land attached to Saint Ann's. All the other complaints were from places attended by Badin. Some of the "rebels," as Father Maes calls them, afterwards retracted what they had said; but unfortunately, there are not wanting signs that the retractions were made under some duress.

marriage, I require preparation for the banns and frequentation of the sacraments. 6. I prescribe rules to be followed in the married state. 7. On Sundays and holy days, I order public prayers to be kept up all the morning, but with intervals of rest. 8. I make continual exactions for the building of churches: fortunately, they do not say that I make them for myself. 9. I forbid excess in clothing and unseemly ornamentation. I will add that I even have women censors of mature age to see that this rule is observed in church. 10. I am too bitter and harsh in giving corrections, etc. Basil Elder calls me a tyrant. 11. Finally, with me is too much confinement [*sic*, in his own English; that is, he imposes too much constraint].<sup>30</sup>

As Father Nerinckx then proceeds to glory in the fact that this list represents his ministerial practices, no more need be said here than that they show an excessive severity and Jansenistic rigorism which should have been held in check. It may be remarked, however, that Father Fenwick's character obliges us to believe that he troubled himself about the first complaint no further than to smile and to tell the people that they did not have to obey.

4°. In this paragraph the missionary says that many are greatly afflicted by these accusations and offer to sign a protest against his calumniators. But this he will not allow, as he has wronged no man. He leaves everything to God. He rejoices that no earthly hope brought him to Kentucky, that he has received no temporal reward, and that whatever providence has bestowed upon him he has used for the greater glory of God. The affair grieves him principally because the knowledge of it

<sup>30</sup> Maes (*op. cit.*, p. 180), in his rendition of No. I in this list, says: "And that is the hour that he himself *as a religious* should keep." The words which we have italicized are not in the original. But he omits, in the same number, the part about Paraguay and the devotional practices in Belgium, which shows Father Nerinckx's real mind. In No. 10 Basil Elder is again rendered "B—— E——."

may make his fellow-countrymen less disposed to come to the mission. Still he will not cease to invite them. Then he asks for an *exeat*.<sup>31</sup>

We do not wish to say that Father Nerinckx did not write this letter with a good intention. Yet we venture to believe that the reader can hardly have failed to detect running through all the document a strain of too much sensitiveness; of too pronounced a combative spirit; of too little consideration for others; and of too strong a conviction of being always in the right, as well as a marked indisposition to allow either honesty, goodwill, or the possibility of correct views in those who ventured to think or to act differently from the Belgian missionary. A previous letter shows that he had been greatly irritated by Father Wilson's unfavorable opinion of the famous Rev. Cornelius Stevens, whom Father Nerinckx considered a second Saint Athanasius.<sup>32</sup> Impartial history, however, by no means places Stevens on so high a pedestal as Father Nerinckx would have him occupy.

Father Badin's letters are at once more numerous and, as a rule, of greater length than those of his friend. One of the two to which we wish particularly to call attention was commenced, November 20, 1806, and finished, February 9, 1807. The other was begun, March 10, and completed, May 6, 1808.<sup>33</sup> But as to give even a *résumé* of them were not only to extend this chapter

<sup>31</sup> This violent letter is in the Baltimore Archives, Case 8 A, U 5.

<sup>32</sup> Nerinckx to Carroll, January 1, 1807 (Baltimore Archives, Case 8 A, U 3).—This document is only the postscript of a letter that cannot now be found in the archives. Together with a letter of March 21, 1807 (*ibid.*, Case 8 A, U 4), it shows that Father Nerinckx made another onslaught on the Dominicans at that time, sending a list (*elenchus*) of charges against them, and that his whole object in doing so was to prevent them from getting charge of the future seminary.

<sup>33</sup> Respectively in the Baltimore Archives, Case 1, H 6 and I 6.

to undue length, but to repeat much of what has already been said, suffice it to state that they are of the same personal nature, and characterized by the same extravagant language and accusations, and the same lack of proof and charity as the documents which we have reviewed from the pen of Father Nerinckx. Both these zealous missionaries were merciless towards those who did not accord with their views.

Although himself only an ordinary theologian, Father Badin affects to belittle the theological attainments of the early friars, and says they are afraid of the learning of Father Nerinckx. But to us the evidence seems to point the other way. More than once the fathers requested Bishop Carroll to use his good offices in order to establish a system of conferences for the clergy in Kentucky, and to suggest some common ground on which they could agree. He did so in letters to Father Badin; but the letters were never shown to the friars, nor their contents made known to them. The conferences were never held.<sup>34</sup> The only author whom Father Badin seemed willing to follow for such a purpose, was Antoine, a theologian of a pronouncedly rigorous type whose views pleased those imbued with Jansenistic principles.

Like his friend, Father Badin accuses the early friars of all manner of intrigues, as well as of a covetous, worldly and grasping spirit, lack of zeal and seeking an easy life. They tell the people, he asserts, of the want of harmony among the clergy; let it be understood that the Dominicans, because religious, are not subject to the bishop; declare that the other missionaries are too severe; and otherwise sow the seeds of trouble and dis-

<sup>34</sup> This is shown by several of Fenwick's letters to Carroll.



cord. But again the evidence seems to point in the opposite direction. In one place, the French missionary, evidently to make his charge the more personal and effective, goes so far as to send Bishop Carroll what he calls a quotation from a letter of Fenwick casting a slur upon the Jesuits. On the margin of the document at the side of this assertion, the prelate has written: "Is not this a breach of private correspondence? Is it revealed to me for any beneficial purpose?"<sup>35</sup> But, we think, the bishop had no cause for apprehension. Fenwick's letters and character, no less than his dealings with the Society of Jesus, offer the strongest rebuttal to Father Badin's charge. Indeed, that nothing really injurious to the reputation of these early friars occurs in the manuscript literature of the time, is certainly proof positive that they were men of edifying life and truly priestly character. And in this connection, it should be further noted that the Frenchman's letters reveal not only great love and admiration for his Belgian friend, but implicit confidence in his judgment. They show clearly enough how well founded were the often expressed fears of the Dominicans, that the Flemish clergyman's influence served to bring into fuller play the ultra-severe and Jansenistic principles of Father Badin, which lay at the root of the discontent among the people, the complaints they sent to the bishop against him, and his charges against the friars.

Of Father Wilson's learning sufficient has been said. So also, though not so profound or so widely read as he, were his colleagues all college-bred men, and possessed of considerable erudition. Like Wilson, Tuite and Angier had won academic honors. Both were lectors

<sup>35</sup> Letter of March 10-May 6, 1808. See note 33.

in sacred theology. Again, apart from what has already been said, and the hallowed memories in which they have ever been held by their later brethren, let it be noted, in opposition to Father Badin's gratuitous assertions, that it would be difficult today to find four priests more disinterested than were those four early friars in Kentucky. Certainly they did not deserve all this vituperation. This is the more evident from the fact that the gentle and humble and holy and unselfish Fenwick is singled out as the principal offender—doubtless because the French missionary imagines the future bishop to be still the superior, although he had voluntarily laid down the reins of authority months before. In some of the French missionary's correspondence Angier and Tuite are acknowledged to be gentlemen of pleasing ways and polished manners.

A later document shows that Bishop Carroll was much displeased with many of Badin's actions, and with his letter of March 10–May 6, 1808. The missionary was evidently taken severely to task. In spite of this, however, he sought to justify himself in his characteristic way. The result was a letter begun, August 29, and finished, October 7, 1808. It is from this that we learn of the bishop's displeasure. It is a document of more than thirty-nine closely written pages, in which its writer endeavors to defend himself by minute explanations, a renewal of his former charges, and the assistance of select friends.<sup>36</sup>

Through all the unpleasantness the friars wrote but seldom—only when obliged to do so through duty, charity or self-defense. Their letters, calm, temperate and judicial, even under the trying circumstances,

<sup>36</sup> Baltimore Archives, Case 1, I 10.

show not only a broad and kindly spirit, but much self-possession. More than once, as has been stated, they requested the bishop to designate some middle course in which all could concur. On the other hand, Fathers Badin and Nerinckx, stern, inflexible and unable to see any views except their own, wanted no compromise. Neither of them, as far as we have been able to find, ever sought the advice of the bishop in the matters under dispute. Nor did they follow his suggestions. They left nothing untried to have him condemn the Dominicans.

That Bishop Carroll held all these priests of Kentucky in high esteem is certain. It is also certain that he sought to bridge over their differences. His marginal notes and underlining on the letters from Fathers Badin and Nerinckx show that he was often perplexed, if not vexed, at their charges. Precisely what he said in his letter to the French missionary that brought forth Badin's long reply of August 29–October 7, 1808, cannot now be known. But the fact that the unpleasantness, although the two clergymen continued to hold their rigid principles, begins to wane from this time, would indicate that the good prelate must have insisted on more charity and more moderation. Perhaps, too, the part the Dominicans took, in 1809, in helping Father Nerinckx to escape the administratorship of Louisiana, to which he had been appointed, had its share in the establishment of a better understanding. By the time of Bishop Flaget's arrival in Kentucky, Father Nerinckx, it would seem, had learned to esteem the friars. And during his last years in Kentucky Father Badin appears to have regarded them as his best friends. Indeed, while abroad, the French mis-

sionary made two unsuccessful attempts to join the Order of Saint Dominic for the American province. Failing to become a member of the First Order, he made his profession as a Dominican tertiary, and returned to the United States to labor under Fenwick who was then the bishop of Cincinnati.

The following words of Father Wilson, written to Bishop Carroll some seven months after the friar reached the missions, we think, present a fair idea of the state of affairs in Kentucky at the time of the arrival of the Dominicans in the state.

The men [he says], both young and old, of this poor country are very shy of Priests. A little good nature will, I hope, in time bring many to their duty. Some already drop in by degrees. Not one in twenty frequent the Sacraments—few since they left Maryland. They will not be driven, they say. And indeed, with good words, they will do almost anything for you. Considering their poverty, they are beyond expectation generous in our regard. I hope Almighty God will bless their good-will and desire of seeing Priests, as they call them, of their own. I hope we shall agree with Mr. Badin, whose principles, with those of Mr. Nerinckx, are somewhat rigid in many points. But this will be an affair of some prudence and forbearance.<sup>37</sup>

The characteristic of the people of Kentucky noted by the learned divine, more than a century ago, remains a characteristic of them to this day. No more stubborn people can be found anywhere if one attempts to coerce them. One would look in vain for a more docile people if those who should guide them are but kind and lead the way. Father Nerinckx also remarked this trait of the Catholics in Kentucky. Had he and Father Badin adapted themselves to the spirit of their flocks, doubtless not only would their ministrations have been

<sup>37</sup> July 25, 1806 (Baltimore Archives Case 8 B, L 5).



more acceptable, but the fruits of the labors at once more abundant and more lasting. In his famous letter of June 2, 1806, the Flemish missionary says to Bishop Carroll:

Nevertheless, I will add this in favor of these people: however refractory very many of them are, they offer, in my opinion, much hope for good; if the directors of their souls, be they ever so exacting (or, if you will, even strict), are only kind and gentle, and show sympathy for their weakness. Harshness terrifies and repels them; but paternal piety wins even the unwilling.<sup>38</sup>

Father Nerinckx seldom mentions the names of those with whom he had had trouble; but Father Badin was less cautious. In this way, we learn that their differences were with some of the best and most influential Catholics in the state. Such, for instance, were the Spaldings, the Hamiltons, the Lancasters, the Elders and the Simpsons. In speaking of these families, Father Badin even surpasses the acerbity of Father Nerinckx. A fair appreciation of the French missionary's character and practices may be found in the following words from his own pen. "Mr. Nerinckx says that I mean well, but that, in his opinion, I take the wrong means to gain the confidence of the people. My success in that difficult [affair] and many other affairs for fifteen years undoes his opinion."<sup>39</sup>

Attention has been called to the kindly attitude and spirit of the Dominicans, and to their views of the unpleasantness. Let us now give two concrete examples of this as exemplified in Fenwick. Writing to Rev. Robert A. Angier, who was still in Maryland, he tells his friend that he may have Father Badin as a companion on his way to Kentucky. Then he writes:

<sup>38</sup> See note 14.

<sup>39</sup> See note 36.

He [Badin] has not yet offered me any of the church lands he once talked so much of. He even objects to giving us the little tract belonging to the chapel which we serve, and which was bought for the Priest who should serve it. . . . For the peace of the Church here, and for the sake of harmony among us, I wish you would request of Bishop Carroll to examine into his and Mr. Nerinckx's whole practice, and to require a clear and minute statement of the whole—and of ours—and to pronounce whether they or we are singular in our practice, and which of us must reform.<sup>40</sup>

The other example is contained in the closing words of a letter of Fenwick to Father Concanen. The document was written more than two months after the selection of a bishop for Kentucky, and is the only one in which the friar so much as refers to the affair in all his correspondence with Rome. Here he writes:

I have never mentioned to Rev. Mr. Badin that I had leave to admit him in our Order, as I found, on my [second] arrival in the country, his attachment and zeal for us were no longer the same as at our first meeting. His mind, we believe, was changed by associating with a new missionary from Flanders, Rev. Mr. Nerinx, who seems to have imbibed prejudices against us, and to have instilled them into the mind of Mr. Badin. Mr. Badin is a zealous and active man on the mission, and will likely do better under his own control and the Bishop's than in our Order. He is generally more zealous than prudent—in fine, much of a Frenchman. Consequently I think he is an unfit man to be Bishop of Kentucky. I wish him not to be, for our sakes, and for religion in general. Bishop Carroll, in a letter to me, says he fears his nomination will be unpopular, though he was, in the first place, recommended among others, in consequence of his zeal and long service in Kentucky, having been [for] some time the only Priest there. I do not mean or wish, dear Sir, to hurt the good man in your opinion, but to say, though he is a man of real merit, yet [he] is unfit to

<sup>40</sup> Fenwick, Kentucky, to Rev. R. A. Angier, Maryland, [1807] (Archives of Saint Joseph's Province).

fill a Bishop's place, on account of his overbearing, hasty temper, and his harsh, strict and rigid practice in *Sacro Tribunali*. This, I know, is Bishop Carroll's opinion. If you have any influence in the Pope's Council, you will serve us and the Church in Kentucky by preventing his nomination. The good Doctor Carroll is our real friend.<sup>41</sup>

With this quotation from a document which is a fair exemplar of all the friars' letters on the question, we may close an episode which, even if it is somewhat sad, need offer no cause for shock or scandal. As long as men, even clergymen (be they ever so good), remain in this land of trial and probation, such things will occasionally happen. Saints Augustine and Jerome are an example in point. Fathers Badin and Nerinckx were ever the attacking parties; the others necessarily on the defensive. We have dwelt on the unpleasantness at some length, much against our liking, only because misrepresentation, the interest of true history and a just defense obliged us to such a course. Though the affair can hardly fail to throw something of a shadow on the names of two ambassadors of Christ which we should like to see glow with all possible luster, it casts no serious reflection on their character. Neither does it detract from their reputation for piety and apostolic zeal.

Few priests, we venture to believe, can examine the documents in the case, and fail to pronounce the teachings and practice of the Dominicans not only kindlier, but saner, more Catholic and better calculated to bear good fruit. Unlike Father Howlett, who deftly insinuates that it is a question whether these friars were a real benefit to the missions, those in possession of first-

<sup>41</sup> Lexington, Kentucky, July 10, 1808 (Archives of the Dominican Master General, Codex XIII, 731).

hand evidence will be constrained to declare the presence of the Dominicans in Kentucky at that time an undisguised blessing to both the Church and the people of the state.<sup>42</sup> That they were regarded as such a blessing by the Catholics at large, no bad judges, we think undeniable history. As tells us a traveller, writing from Elizabethtown, Kentucky, January 14, 1825, Fenwick and Wilson, the two fathers specially censured by the Belgian and French missionaries, were idols in the state. They won the hearts of all—the former by his zeal and “engaging and unaffected manners,” the latter by his “moderation and extensive ecclesiastical learning.”<sup>43</sup>

It is with a feeling of no little relief that we now close this ungrateful chapter, to take up topics more useful and edifying. It has been written, we repeat, solely in vindication of good men who have been unjustly maligned.

<sup>42</sup> HOWLETT, *Life of Rev. Charles Nerinckx*, pp. 163–164.—Although this biographer is not so unfair as Father Maes, one must needs be blind not to read his thoughts between the lines. It is indeed strange that neither of these authors could find time to say a single good word of the future bishop of Cincinnati and his companions in religion. The early letters of Fathers Badin and Nerinckx, there can be no doubt, were responsible for the unfavorable opinion of the friars expressed by Rev. John Dilhet in his *État de l'Église ou du Diocèse des États Unis*.

<sup>43</sup> *United States Catholic Miscellany*, July 20, 1825.



## CHAPTER IX

### "AN ITINERANT PREACHER"

FATHER FENWICK'S humility, as has been seen, caused him to request, in letter after letter to Doctor Concanen, Father Wilson's appointment as superior of his little band of Friars Preacher. Accordingly, February 27, 1807, the Most Rev. Pius J. Gaddi, in response, as the letters patent expressly declare, to this earnest solicitation, issued the document making the learned Englishman provincial of the new American branch of the Order. On the same day, Father Concanen forwarded the appointment, together with a letter of his own, to Father Fenwick. But it was not until October that the important paper reached its destination.<sup>1</sup>

The joy and relief that it gave the humble friar to step down into the ranks, may be best judged from his own words. "Your esteemed letter [he writes to Father Concanen] was accompanied with a copy of new offices and the patent of Prior Provincial for Father Wilson, which was read the next day to the community, and delivered to him, easing me of an immense load of concern and anguish of mind."<sup>2</sup> Another cause for his happiness, we may be assured, was the prospect now opened to him of a greater liberty to engage in the apostolate of gathering souls to Christ. But a further brief

<sup>1</sup> Wilson's letters of appointment (Archives of Saint Joseph's Province); Fenwick, Lexington, Kentucky, to Concanen, Rome, July 10, 1808 (Archives of the Dominican Master General, Codex XIII, 731).

<sup>2</sup> Fenwick's letter to Concanen as in preceding note.

word on the incipient province, the church and convent of Saint Rose, and the College of Saint Thomas of Aquin is required, before taking up the subject of our friar's last apostolic years in Kentucky. Yet this course will necessitate some repetition.

Father Fenwick had held the reins of authority long enough to give proof of possessing no mean administrative ability. He had conceived and successfully launched the pious enterprise; had gathered the nucleus of a new province of his Order, and had led his little community, first, to America, and then to Kentucky where he secured a foundation. Under him the first house of Dominicans in the United States and a preparatory college had been built, and work begun on the church of Saint Rose. He had moulded the life of the infant institution, mapped out its course, and impressed his character upon it. So, too, had he collected the first recruits to the Order, and prepared the way for the erection of a purely secular college.

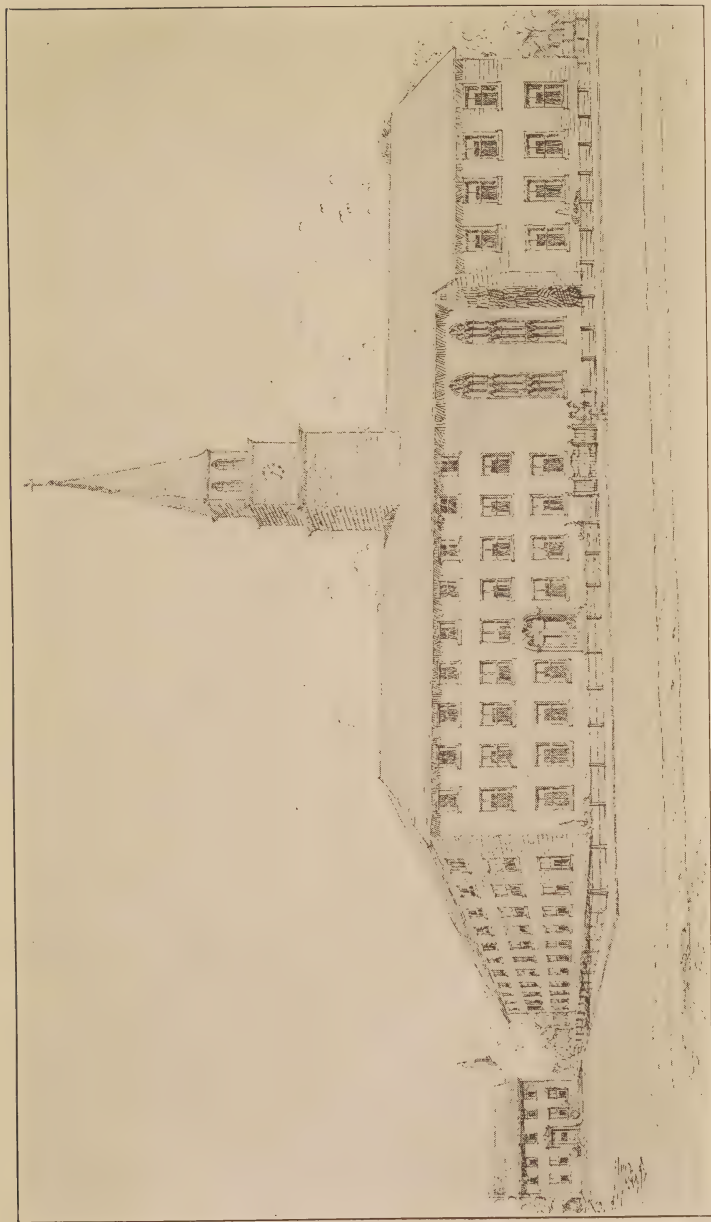
It is rare, indeed, that two men are found so of one mind and one heart as were Wilson and Fenwick. Often had they discussed the policy and the outlines of the work which would best insure the success of the Order in the great American republic—the ways and means it were wisest to adopt. The two friends seemed ever to be in accord. All this assured harmony of action and unchanged views. It was but natural, therefore, that Father Fenwick should rejoice in the thought that not only would what he had wrought and planned with so much painstaking care, be brought to completion under the management of the new superior, his friend and the man of his choice, but that the same ideas would continue to inspire his brethren and to direct the

course of the province which he had brought into existence. He could have made no better selection for his successor than Father Wilson. As Webb tells us:

Father Thomas Wilson was fitted by nature and grace, as well as by culture, for the position to which he had been appointed. He commanded both admiration and respect, the first on account of his great learning and acknowledged talents, and the last because of his adherence to the right on all occasions, and the virtues he practiced in the sight of men. It were impossible that between such a preceptor and his pupils [that is, the young candidates to the Order] there should not have grown up affection on the one hand and reverence on the other. That he loved them was shown by his solicitude in everything that concerned them, and most especially in their advancement in the knowledge of divine things; and that he was held by them in the most profound reverence is evidenced by the fact that in their after-lives they never appeared weary of rehearsing his praises.<sup>3</sup>

Under Father Wilson's wise guidance the novitiate, than which nothing was nearer to the heart of Father Fenwick, though growth was slow, prospered fairly well, considering the great disadvantages of location, times and other circumstances. But what meant more to the future bishop than mere numbers, was the spirit of self-sacrifice, zeal, humility and religious discipline with which the young candidates were imbued. This, indeed, promised good fruit for the tree which he had planted with so much care and watched with such ceaseless anxiety. It told him that he had seen rightly, when he felt that the great need of the western Church was "a nursery," as he was wont to call it, wherein a properly trained and educated native clergy could be prepared for the sacred ministry. Himself a man of God, Father Fenwick would have those who serve at the altar, practice the highest virtues.

<sup>3</sup> WEBB, *op. cit.*, p. 206.



SAINT ROSE'S CHURCH AND PRIORY AND SAINT THOMAS OF AQUIN COLLEGE THE MOTHER INSTITUTION OF  
THE OLD WEST





Saint Rose's Church, in spite of earlier promises, was not completed until the winter of 1809, though it was doubtless in use before that date. It was dedicated and solemnly opened for divine service on Christmas Day, that year.<sup>4</sup> In the meantime, a portion of the College of Saint Thomas of Aquin—this was perhaps, in part, the cause of the slow progress made on the church—had been erected and opened for the education of the youth of Kentucky. But, owing to stress of poverty, it was not until about 1812 that all the buildings, thanks to a legacy of some two thousand dollars from Bishop Concanen, were finally finished. The dimensions of the church, long considered among the most beautiful in the west, were one hundred and ten feet by forty. To the northern end of this was joined the main structure of the college and convent, one hundred and five feet long and three stories high. From this again there extended to the east a wing of the same height and about eighty feet in length. Above the cluster of buildings, all of brick and truly imposing for the times, rose a tower five and ninety feet high. This was crowned with a splendid cross.<sup>5</sup>

Although Father Fenwick, because of his active duties, did little teaching in the college, it was his conception. So, too, for he was appointed to the office of procurator on ceasing to be superior, did the drudgery work of its construction fall largely on his willing

<sup>4</sup> Father Badin to Bishop Carroll, February 5, 1810 (Baltimore Archives, Case 1, J 7).—In this letter Father Badin writes: "The church of St. Rose was opened on Christmas day; that of St. Patrick [Danville] will be opened probably on the 17th or 18th of March." This document, therefore, proves Saint Rose's to have been the first brick church completed in Kentucky. Tradition tells us that it was in use before its dedication.

<sup>5</sup> Fenwick, Springfield, Kentucky, to Jacob Dittoe, Lancaster, Ohio, May 12, 1812 (Archives of Saint Joseph's Priory, Somerset, Ohio); *The Catholic Advocate*, March 10, 1839.

shoulders. It was the first establishment of its kind under Catholic auspices west of the Alleghany Mountains, and one of the largest and most commodious educational institutions in the western or southern country. The number of youths who flocked to it from all parts was a source of no little joy, if not of some honest pride, to Father Fenwick's candid soul. In this also he saw the realization of his long-cherished dream, his Order established and laboring for the welfare of the Church in his native land.

All this, however, was not accomplished without exertions, sacrifices and privations. The buildings, expensive for the day, had occasioned a heavy debt; the people were poor, the times trying, money scarce and almost impossible to obtain. Few of the pupils in the college were able to pay in full for their board and tuition. Many, as was the custom in all pioneer educational institutions situated in the country, paid their way partly in kind or by manual labor. Not a few were educated out of pure charity. The most rigid economy was demanded along every line. The more advanced students, according to the wont of bygone days, helped to teach the lower grades. Not only were the priests and novices professors; their seared, brown hands told clearly that they did not, in their moments of leisure, hesitate to engage in the commonest toil. For the novices, who had their own studies to make, such occupations filled in their hours of recreation. Often were the brethren sorely put for the necessities of life. The best they had always went to the boys, the community largely subsisting on what was left, which was not only scanty, but poor in quality. Their raiment was in keeping with their food, meager and of coarse homespun.

Withal, the college flourished, having at one time an enrollment of more than two hundred, a large number for that period. Within its walls men of note were prepared for their careers. Its impress upon Kentucky and the south was immensely beneficial. From its hallowed precincts came forth scholarly priests to labor in the cause of Christ and to grace our American hierarchy.<sup>6</sup>

These hardships retarded the growth of the province. For although the young men of Kentucky entered the preparatory school, or even the novitiate, in goodly numbers, few could content themselves, used as they were to a rugged life, with that on which the friars were obliged to live. It speaks volumes in praise of those early religious that no murmur was ever heard because of their poverty and privations; no word of complaint or criticism against the people for lack of generosity. But none bore these hardships more bravely or more patiently than Father Edward Dominic Fenwick. In spite of great difficulties, everyone multiplied himself, doing the work of several men. In this, again, the future apostle of Ohio was an example to the others. The good they accomplished will not be known until the day of recompense. In the boyhood days of the writer, it was a source of edification to observe the reverence with which the old people spoke of them. Their names, although but little has been written of them, are still household words through all the old parish of Saint Rose, which they served so faithfully.

In October, 1807, Father Robert A. Angier arrived from Maryland, and likely brought from Bishop Carroll the letters patent of provincial for Father Wilson.

<sup>6</sup> This secular college was closed, in 1828, by Father Raphael Muños.



Before this, as has been seen, Father Fenwick had shown a commendable ardor as a missionary. From this time, notwithstanding many other duties, he managed to sow the seeds of his zeal broadcast. In this he was imitated by Father Angier, a faithful co-laborer, whose pastoral efforts in the former colony of Lord Baltimore had won the highest praise from the father of our American hierarchy. At the request of the same prelate, Father Angier took up his residence in Scott County, whence he attended the widely scattered Catholics through the northern and eastern portions of Kentucky. Father Fenwick's letter, written from Lexington, July 10, 1808, to his friend, Doctor Concanen, who had then become bishop of New York, gives us a good idea of their apostolic labors:

We have now [he says] acquired some knowledge of this country, climate, manners and customs of the poeple—so much so, I may say, as to be entirely satisfied and pleased as to the whole. The Catholics, to the number of 15,000 or 20,000 are dispersed all over the state by their poor and lowly situation, not being able to purchase lands in the richest parts.<sup>7</sup> [This] affords us occasions of travelling a deal, and of seeing all parts, having to ride from fifty to two hundred and near three hundred miles, to visit the sick, console the afflicted, etc. The climate is mild and healthy, the people hospitable, sincere, docile and anxious for instruction. There is no predominant religion, but a great variety of sectaries, much ignorance, and little virtue, excepting among the Catholics, whose morals in general are good, and every way open for improvement. They seem to want nothing but mild, patient and compassionate Pastors to lead them to contentment and happiness. They are zealous and fervent for instruction, and liberal to assist their Pastors according to their abilities, which are small.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> This seems to be a very much exaggerated estimate of the number of Catholics in Kentucky at the time.

<sup>8</sup> Archives of the Dominican Master General, Codex XIII, 731.

But the friar's zeal was not to be confined to the limits of Kentucky. In this same year (1808), he passed over the Ohio River into the state of the same name, to use a phrase that was dear to him, “in search of stray sheep,” thus opening a field of fruitful toil that was to crown his name with an additional halo of glory. Of this, however, we shall speak in the following chapter.

It must have been an occasion of keen joy for our subject's affectionate heart, when informed, late in 1808, by Archbishop Carroll of Doctor Concanen's appointment to the new bishopric of New York.<sup>9</sup> But this happiness was abated by the knowledge that the prelate was held in Europe by the intrigues of Napoleon Bonaparte. In the early half of 1810, however, word was received that the bishop might soon be expected in his diocese. Accordingly, Father Fenwick was instructed by his superior to proceed to New York that he might welcome to America, in the name of the community, the friend and patron of the little province. The long journey was made in the summer of 1810. While awaiting the arrival of Doctor Concanen, and doubtless at the request of his cousin, the Rev. B. J. Fenwick, S.J., (later the second bishop of Boston), the zealous Dominican went on to Albany to administer to the spiritual needs of the Catholics in those parts. At Albany, he fell sick and was brought to death's door.<sup>10</sup>

On his return to the metropolitan city, Father Fenwick must have been shocked by the news that Bishop Concanen, a man whom he so loved and admired, and

<sup>9</sup> On Concanen see *The Catholic Historical Review*, January and April, 1916.

<sup>10</sup> Rev. Anthony Kohlman, New York, to Archbishop Carroll, October 12, 1810 (Baltimore Archives, Case 4, M 5).

from whose advice he expected much, had passed away suddenly at Naples, where he had gone in the hope of finding a vessel that would bring him to America. From the fact that the good friar records a baptism in the register of old Saint Peter's, on Barclay Street, November 16, 1810, it would seem that the loss of strength caused by his recent illness induced him to tarry in the east longer than he expected. But we soon find him back at his post of duty, and busy at his harvest for heaven. He never took any rest or recreation. Nor did he ever appear more happy than when most diligently engaged in God's work.

Again, in the next year, he journeyed back to Maryland, doubtless using the National Highway, which was then the great thoroughfare between the east and the middle west, and visiting his flock in Ohio as he passed along the way. On his return, he joined Bishop Flaget and his retinue at Pittsburgh and accompanied them to the episcopal see of Bardstown. Because of his experience in travelling and his knowledge of the country, the Dominican was appointed by the bishop to act "as purveyor and general superintendent" for the little ecclesiastical body as they descended the Ohio.<sup>11</sup>

The arrival of their bishop was an occasion of undisguised joy to all Kentucky, but to none more than to Father Fenwick and his brethren. It was perhaps on the occasion of the voyage down the Ohio, of which we have just spoken, that was commenced a lasting friendship with the Rev. Guy Ignatius Chabrat, then in sub-deacon's orders, but later auxiliary to Bishop Flaget. And in this connection, it may be noticed that our missionary and his confrères had the happiness, Saturday,

<sup>11</sup> SPALDING, *Life of Bishop Flaget*, p. 69.

December 21, 1811, of seeing their young friend made an ambassador of Christ in their church of Saint Rose.<sup>12</sup> It was the first ordination to the priesthood in Kentucky, and an occasion of much pious curiosity for the people.

By this time, Father Fenwick's travels in the fulfillment of his apostolate had caused him to be known as "an itinerant preacher." It was a sobriquet that not only amused him, but afforded him a little honest pride, possibly because it likened him to the historic "Friars Pilgrim for Christ" (*Fratres Itinerantes*) who were organized, in the early days of the Order, to labor for the conversion of pagans in eastern Europe and western Asia.<sup>13</sup> His life, while not so beset with perils, was perhaps no less strenuous, and not much less lonely than was that of the "Friars Pilgrim," his confrères of old. Nor were his early labors free from dangers. His travels exposed him to all extremes of weather. Often he had to swim his horse across swollen streams to reach a mission he was to attend, or to administer the sacraments to some one in the agony of death. Not infrequently, when overtaken by darkness in the wilderness, and he did not know his way, he was obliged to alight from his horse and to spend the night in the backwoods of Kentucky, still infested with wolves and other beasts of prey.

Grace, nature and his early training in Maryland combined to fit our missionary for such a ministerial life.

<sup>12</sup> Bishop Flaget, Kentucky, to Archbishop Carroll, Baltimore, January 1, 1812 (Baltimore Archives, Case 8 A, K 3).—This letter refutes the statement which one often reads, that Father Chabrat was ordained on Christmas Day. The bishop says positively: "On the 21st December, I had the happiness of ordaining Mr. Chabrat. The ceremony was performed in St. Rose's Church."

<sup>13</sup> For the Friars Pilgrim for Christ see O'DANIEL, *The Friars Preacher, A Seventh Century Sketch*, pp. 57 ff.



He was one of God's chosen servants. He lived only for Christ and his neighbor. He thirsted for labor as for his daily bread. To an unquenchable thirst for souls he joined an unflagging perseverance, which caused him to keep ceaselessly active, and carried him in every direction. His horse's back was said to be his home; the saddle his house of prayer, for he read his breviary while riding from one place to another. No matter what his fatigue or indisposition, he always said his daily mass whenever it was possible to do so. Often would he travel many miles fasting that he might have the happiness of offering up the holy sacrifice.

Fortunately, the outdoor life which he now led, while it did not add to his strength, steeled Father Fenwick's nerves, and gave him an energy that seemed never to tire. To great patience he added mild, affable manners, and a kindly disposition that made his ways captivating. His honest face was an index to the honest soul within. With a marvellous facility of adapting himself to every emergency and every character he combined a wonderful talent for winning men to God. An American himself, frank, open and sincere, he possessed to an extraordinary degree the gift of dealing with his non-Catholic fellow-countrymen, and of bringing them into the Church. Few, if any, of the early missionaries of Kentucky made more converts than he during the time he labored in the state. It is said that, so thorough were his instructions, those whom he brought into the fold were sure to remain.

Having paid the beautiful tribute to Father Wilson which we have seen, Bishop Spalding proceeds to bestow a no less edifying and deserved encomium upon Father Fenwick.

Another ornament of the Order in North America [he writes], less brilliant, but, perhaps, more useful still, was the illustrious Father Edward Fenwick. After he had resigned the office of superior, he became a general missionary. He was seldom at home, and lived almost constantly on horseback. His zeal for the salvation of souls was as boundless as it was untiring and persevering. He traversed Kentucky in every direction, in quest of scattered Catholic families, whom he was wont to designate as “stray sheep.” Often was he known to ride thirty or forty miles out of his way, to visit a lonely Catholic family, of whose existence he had been informed. Though not gifted with great natural talents, he possessed a peculiar tact for winning souls to Christ.<sup>14</sup> His manners were of the most familiar, affable, and winning kind. He could adapt himself to every emergency, and to every description of character and temperament. Frank, open and sincere by nature, and an American himself, he possessed an instinctive talent for dealing with Americans, whether Catholics or Protestants. Multitudes of the latter were converted to Catholicity through his agency.

Often, after a long and painful ride, he reached, at night-fall, the house of a distant Catholic family, which he had determined to visit. Before dismounting from his horse, he frequently, on these occasions, entered into familiar conversation with his new acquaintances, by telling them, “that he had travelled out of his way in quest of ‘stray sheep’; and asking them whether they had heard of any such in that vicinity?” Having thus established a sort of intimacy, he explained to them, in the course of the evening, the symbolical meaning of “stray sheep,” and seldom failed of his object.<sup>15</sup>

Father Fenwick’s affable temperament and kindly disposition were so well known, that they are spoken of to this day by the people of Saint Rose’s congregation. An amusing incident of an inconvenience which his

<sup>14</sup> We must demur to this statement of Doctor Spalding. Father Fenwick possessed splendid natural gifts.

<sup>15</sup> SPALDING, *Sketches of the Early Catholic Missions in Kentucky*, pp. 155-156.

good name caused him, through his nephew, Father Nicholas D. Young, has come down to us by tradition, and has been recorded in the work from which we have just quoted. It deserves a place in this biography; and we cannot do better than give it as narrated by the same charming writer.

He was sent for by an old lady, not a Catholic, who lived at a distance of four miles. Having no horse at the time, he was compelled to perform the journey on foot, in a dark night, and over bad roads. On reaching the house, he found the old lady sitting by the fire, surrounded by her friends. She stated to him very gravely, that knowing him to be a very kind-hearted man, she had sent for him in order to procure twenty-five cents' worth of tobacco, of which she then stood greatly in need! Father Fenwick, though excessively wearied, could not suppress a laugh at the old lady's vexatious conceit. He handed her the money, stating that he was not in the habit of carrying tobacco in his pockets; and on leaving the house, simply requested her, with a smile, to send to him for the money the next time she needed tobacco, and not to put him to the trouble of travelling four miles on foot.<sup>16</sup>

Other incidents not dissimilar in character have been told of the kind-hearted friar. But we may feel that he did not suffer them to ruffle a temper over which he had perfect control. One such episode that has been associated with his name, is found in an interesting little volume written by Father John Grassi, S.J., in 1818. It tells us, in substance, that a Dominican father was summoned on a distant sick-call. When he reached the house, after a ride of thirty miles through the forest, he was surprised to find the lady who had sent for him almost as well as himself. Nor was this all. As he had had trouble in finding his way through the woods, she

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

mounted her horse and acted as his guide for some distance on the return journey.<sup>17</sup>

We have recorded these incidents, because they are not merely side-lights on the frontier-life of bygone days, and the hardships of our pioneer missionaries: they bring into clearer relief the beautiful, Christ-like character of Cincinnati's first Catholic bishop. They show how his courage shrank before no trial, and was appalled by no difficulty. They are incentives for later generations to imitate those that have gone before. They edify, and cause honor to be given to those to whom honor is due.

Of our friar the Hon. Ben. J. Webb, the leading historian of the Church in Kentucky, says:

Fathers Fenwick and Angier found ample employment in traversing the State after what the former was in the habit of denominating “stray sheep.” In addition to the older Catholic settlements in Nelson and Washington counties, there were minor settlements in Scott, Madison, Fayette, Jefferson, Bullitt and Breckinridge counties, and isolated Catholic families living in almost all the other organized counties of the State. Many of these settlements and families had rarely or never been visited by a priest. Father Fenwick saw and appreciated the danger to which these hapless persons were exposed, and he sought to lessen or avert it. With the approbation of his superior, he became an itinerant, and from that time to the date of his installation as first bishop of the See of Cincinnati, he may be said to have literally lived in the saddle. His zeal was as restless as it was earnest. It was a common thing with him to ride a distance of fifty miles, sustained by the mere hope that he might be of spiritual service

<sup>17</sup> GRASSI, *Notizie Varie sullo Stato Presente della Repubblica degli Stati Uniti dell' America Settentrionale Scritto al Principio del 1818* (2nd ed.), pp. 132-33.—The late Rev. E. I. Devitt, S.J., translated parts of this little book for the *Woodstock Letters*, XI, 234 ff., giving it the title: “The Catholic Religion in the United States in 1818.” Father Grassi does not mention the name of the Dominican who made the useless journey; but tradition tells us that it was one of Father Fenwick's experiences.



to some out-dweller in the wilderness, whose name, casually heard, was associated in his mind with that of some Catholic family he had known in Maryland. He traversed and retraversed Kentucky, in all directions, everywhere accomplishing his purpose, which was but to give opportunity to isolated Catholic families of reconciling themselves with God through the worthy reception of the sacraments. He had a wonderful gift of persuasion, and being able to adapt himself and his discourse to the individual peculiarities of his hearers, he was rarely known to fail in his endeavors to infuse into them something of his own spirit.<sup>18</sup>

In his humility and desire to hide from his left hand the good deeds of his right, Father Fenwick rather preferred to leave the more populous Catholic colonies to the care of the other missionaries. Although his ministrations to the widely scattered small settlements, isolated families, or even individual Catholics, entailed more riding, hardships and privations, in addition to being a source of expense to his already poverty-stricken community, he realized that in this he was surely doing the work of the Saviour. He seemed to feel that he was acting the part of the good shepherd of Scripture, who left the nine and ninety sheep to search for the one that was lost. Doubtless it was his zeal to aid such neglected members of the faith that fathered his well-known expression, that he was "in search of stray sheep."

But the man of God did not limit his search to those of the household. He had ever before his mind the words of Christ, who said: "And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring; and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (John X, 16). Nothing was nearer to our Dominican's heart than to make these words of the

<sup>18</sup> WEBB, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-205.

divine Master a realization. As the same historian remarks:

In his many journeys in Kentucky, Father Fenwick was necessarily thrown much into the company of Protestants; and he learned by degrees to appreciate the principal obstacles to their conversion. To remove these obstacles, without incurring the suspicion of intrusiveness, was always one of the most painstaking of his employments. In countries denominated Christian, there have been few missionary priests who were more successful than Father Fenwick in inducing returns to Catholic unity.<sup>19</sup>

We have now arrived at a place in our narrative where we must speak of the widening of the field of its subject's apostolic activity. But the transfer of his labors from Kentucky to Ohio brought no change in the tenor of his life, except the added care and responsibility consequent on the burden of honor and enlarged zeal.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

## CHAPTER X

### EARLY HISTORY OF OHIO: CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL

THE romantic glamour with which the discoveries and explorations of the Spaniards in the New World are invested, is known to every American reader. Their brave, but long futile, attempts to colonize Florida are full of pathetic interest. Beginning with the successful efforts of Pedro Menendez de Avilés, in 1565, however, the proud conquistadors gradually gained possession of that peninsula, together with the territory adjacent to the northern borders of the Gulf of Mexico.

From the time of successfully founding the Jamestown Settlement, Virginia, in 1607, the English gradually established colonies along the eastern coast as far north as Maine and as far south as Georgia. But it was in the present Dominion of Canada that the French obtained their first firm footing in the Western Hemisphere. There, in 1608, they founded the picturesque city of Quebec on the banks of the beautiful Saint Lawrence. Nor were they slow to raise the standard of their native land in other localities of the northern country.

The Spaniard remained at the south, where he made our earliest history, whether civic or ecclesiastical. The Briton long clung to the Atlantic seaboard, contenting himself with wresting the settlement of New York from the Dutch, with encroachments upon his southern neighbor, and with efforts to prevent the progress of the Gallican colonies at the north. But the bold, restless, dar-

ing Gaul soon struck inland. The hardy French trapper and fur trader, in plying their business, penetrated the forests and threaded their way along the water courses ever farther and farther towards the west. In the wake of these followed pioneer settlers of the same race, full of adventure and alert for gain. They happily fraternized with the red man and won his friendship. In this way, by the opening of the eighteenth century, a chain of colonies and forts or posts, over which floated the flag of France, stretched from Quebec to the Great Lakes, and thence on to the Mississippi.

Down the Father of Waters these venturesome spirits had made their way to its debouchment into the Gulf of Mexico, where they were soon to lay the foundation of New Orleans. Along the borders of this majestic stream there arose another cordon of French forts and colonies. Similar stockade settlements were planted here and there in the present states of Illinois and Indiana. Although the Ohio River had been discovered and explored by the chevalier, Robert de la Salle, in 1669 or 1670, and a fort had been erected on the Miami or Maumee, in 1680, the territory embraced in our modern commonwealth of Ohio seems for a long time not to have offered any special attraction for the French.

But in 1749, Celoron de Bienville traversed this portion of the New World, took possession of it in the name of the king of France, and deposited leaden seals in attestation of his official act. No doubt this step was taken not less to protect France's more westerly domains against the encroachments of the English from the east, than to secure the great wealth which, it could



now be seen, would some day accrue to the masters of so beautiful and so favored a country. About the same time forts were erected at Erie, Pennsylvania, on Sandusky Bay, and on the Cuyahoga and the Great Maumee rivers. Later still, Fort Duquesne was built at the forks of the Alleghany and Monongahela, where now stands Pittsburgh, as a defense against an approaching enemy.

At this period, France possessed in North America an area perhaps twenty times larger than that held by England. Yet these colonies were neglected by the mother country, and the British in the New World outnumbered the French by twenty or more to one. Not only did the diocese of Quebec include all the present Dominion of Canada: it embraced the Ohio Valley, ran down the Mississippi to New Orleans, and extended indefinitely towards the west. All priests in this limitless expanse of territory were subject to the jurisdiction of the bishop of Quebec, and owed him obedience.

Thus the French, as far as history can tell us, were the first of the white race to set foot on the soil of Ohio, of which Father Fenwick was destined to become the apostle. Like the Spaniards, they were Catholics. Like the Spaniards again, they regarded explorations perhaps almost as much as a means of carrying the word of God, the knowledge of Christ, and salvation to the aborigines, as of enlarging the dominions of their king abroad. Whatever may be said of the Spanish conquerors on other grounds, it must be admitted that the early settlers of that race sought to implant Christianity and Catholicity in the New World. The English colonies, with the exception of Maryland, were founded under not merely non-Catholic, but in general

hostilely anti-Catholic auspices. The purposes of their settlers were neither so noble, nor so pure, nor so disinterested as were the aims of the French and Spanish colonists. In spite of what one reads at times, the fate of the red man, wherever the Anglo-Saxon gained a footing, proves only too conclusively the treatment he received from the British pioneer. As with the Spaniards, so with the French, missionary priests were ever found in the vanguard of exploration. Not infrequently, indeed, the zeal of these ecclesiastics to win the Indian to God and to save his soul, though their efforts were not always successful, led them to outstrip the discoverers, and to prepare the way for their onward march.

With the French at the north were Franciscan Recollects, secular priests, Jesuits and Sulpicians. The labors of these faithful ambassadors of Christ in the northwest constitute some of our most edifying and interesting history, whether civil or ecclesiastical. But the Fathers of the Society of Jesus were both the earliest and the more numerous of the missionaries who accompanied the French explorers and settlers into the parts of the present United States of which we have spoken. They were the first to sow the seed of the Gospel in what is now, in point of population, the fourth state of the Union, Ohio.<sup>1</sup> It were thus a small stretch of fancy to believe that the Rev. Edward D. Fenwick must have felt honored in being chosen to succeed these missionaries in their apostolic labors in Ohio; for it was from members of this order, which we know he loved and ad-

<sup>1</sup> SHEA, *History of the Catholic Church in the United States*, III, 330; HOUCK, *The Church in Northern Ohio, and the Diocese of Cleveland* (edition of 1903), I, 2-6. See also Vol. I of Shea's history and his life of Archbishop Carroll, *passim*.

mired, that he had received his earliest lessons in holiness in his native Maryland.

While, as the uppermost parts of Ohio lay along the path of the missionaries, fur traders and explorers, it is likely that these priests entered the state at an earlier date, no document has been discovered to show their presence there before 1749. During that year, says Doctor Shea, Father Joseph de Bonnécamp accompanied de Bienville in his expedition to lay claim to the territory for France. But there is no record of the missionary performing ministerial functions for the aboriginal inhabitants on that occasion.

About 1751, continues the same author, was erected "the first shrine of Catholicity within the limits of the present state of Ohio." Its builder was Father Armand de la Richardie, S.J.; its site that whereon stands our modern Sandusky. Father de la Richardie appears to have come down from near Detroit with a part of the Huron tribe, who became known in their new abode as the Wyandots. Fathers Potier and de Bonnécamp, of the same order, are also said to have labored among the Indians along the southern shores of Lake Erie.<sup>2</sup>

But the vicissitudes of war were soon to force these zealous priests from their latest field of toil in what is now the near-west. The historic impossibility of the French and English to harmonize had combined with thirst for earthly glory and possessions, and with the Briton's strong anti-Catholic animosity, to bring the colonies of the two nations into irreconcilable antagonism.

Learning of the endless resources of the western country under the sway of the French, the English now

<sup>2</sup> See note 1.

began to look with wistful eyes towards that portion of the New World, and to plan wresting it from the hands of the enemy, that its vast wealth might be turned into their own coffers. The French claimed the territory because they had discovered and occupied it. The British based their claims to it on the less tangible grounds of John Cabot's discovery of the northern Atlantic shores in 1497, the vague charters of some of their colonies, various purchases from the Six Nations, or the Iroquois, and the Treaty of Utrecht, by which these Indians were acknowledged to be English subjects. In virtue of this treaty, says Parkman, the Briton "laid claim to every mountain, forest and prairie where the Iroquois had taken a scalp."<sup>3</sup> Nor can it be denied, we think, that the English colonists could not brook the idea of having Catholics on every side of them. This was as fuel added to the fire.

Eventually these rival contentions broke out into the open hostilities known as the French and Indian War. This was in 1754. At first, it was a conflict between the French and English colonies. But in 1756 the quarrel was taken up by France and England, these two nations having declared war against each other during that year. At the outset, in spite of their smaller numbers, success was on the side of the French; but in the end the tide turned in favor of the Briton. The surrender of Quebec, September 18, 1759, decided the fate of the Gallican possessions in North America. By the Treaty of Paris, signed February 10, 1763, France not only ceded to England her claims to the Ohio Valley, but surrendered the whole of Canada.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> PARKMAN, *Montcalm and Wolfe*, I, 125.

<sup>4</sup> The facts given so far in this chapter, without reference, may be found in any good history.



The Treaty of Paris guaranteed to the inhabitants, both red and white, of Canada and the Ohio Valley protection and freedom in the exercise of their religion. Later, Great Britain proceeded to annex to the Province of Canada the vast expanse of country stretching from the Alleghany Mountains westward to the Mississippi, and from the Ohio northward to the Great Lakes. This was in 1774. The measure, which is known in history as the Quebec Act, was likely taken, in large part, the better to carry out the agreement of the treaty regarding Catholic worship in the newly acquired territories. The original Anglo-American settlements along the Atlantic seaboard were intensely angered at this enactment of the English Parliament. Yet the imprecations which these colonists heaped upon the Quebec Act, show that men of their temperament could not wisely have been entrusted with so sacred and so delicate a duty. Their mental constitution made it impossible for them to look with equanimity upon favors shown Roman Catholics. Indeed, there can be no doubt but that this act had not a little to do with the declaration of the war for independence.<sup>5</sup>

Through the French and Indian War the mother country unwittingly prepared the way for the loss of both her own original American colonies and all the western country which she had so lately annexed to Canada. Not merely had the conflict given the colonists a knowledge of their strength, and taught them the science of warfare; it had imbued them with a spirit of independence and a love of liberty, which, when their

<sup>5</sup> One can hardly read the anti-Catholic literature that appeared in the English-speaking colonies at this period without coming to such a conclusion.

own day of oppression came, united them in their successful effort to throw off the yoke of bondage. But in a work like the present it is not necessary to say more of the revolution that made us a free and independent nation, than that the necessity of unity which it imposed upon the colonists, did much towards dissipating the spirit of religious intolerance which mars the pages of our early history. To no other religious body was this so advantageous as to Catholics. It opened the way for a growth of Catholicity in the new American republic such as no other country of modern times has ever seen.

As has been stated in a preceding chapter, this was a subject on which Father Fenwick loved to dwell. He watched the progress of the Church in the land of his birth with a keen delight. Indeed, though he did not live to see its fullest development, no heart could have rejoiced more than that of Cincinnati's first ordinary at the growth of Catholicity on all sides. There can be no doubt that the desire to contribute his mite to so holy a cause had a strong influence on our friar's life, and acted as a spur to his zeal, both as a missionary and as a bishop, in his labors in Kentucky and Ohio.

But it is now time to return to the history of Ohio, which was soon to become the field of the apostolate of the subject of our narrative. The earliest successes of the English in the French and Indian War were in the west. These obliged the Jesuit Fathers, after a few years of labor, to withdraw from their missions on the southern shores of Lake Erie and to retire into Canada.

Thence until more than thirty years later, there is no trace of a priest or of Catholic activity within the present limits of the state. But in 1790, Father Peter Joseph

Didier, the pioneer Benedictine in the United States, appeared at Gallipolis, in southern Ohio. He came to take spiritual charge of the ill-planned and ill-fated Scioto Colony that had just arrived from France. Although Father Didier was a zealous and pious priest, his labors there were of short duration. He built no church. Finding many of the colonists discontented, unruly and deeply imbued with the spirit and principles of the French Revolution, and despairing of accomplishing any permanent good, he continued his way to Saint Louis, where he toiled on in the cause of Christ until his death.<sup>6</sup>

Again, late in 1793, Gallipolis was visited by two other missionaries. They were Fathers Peter Barrière and Stephen T. Badin, who stopped at the little French colony on their way down the Ohio. They were joyfully received by the backwoodsmen. But their stay lasted only three days, during which they baptized forty children. Then they journeyed on to Kentucky, to whose missions they had been sent by Bishop Carroll.<sup>7</sup>

It would seem that Great Britain, at the time of the treaty of 1763, promised that the Anglo-Americans along the Atlantic seaboard would not be permitted to molest the Indians north of the Ohio River. Certainly the king of England later gave instructions that these colonists should not take up homes or make settlements in the territory incorporated in the Province of Canada.<sup>8</sup> Possibly, the purpose of this ordinance was also, at least in part, to keep faith with the promise to His

<sup>6</sup> SHEA, *Life and Times of the Most Rev. John Carroll*, pp. 481-82; *The Catholic Historical Review*, IV, 415 ff. (The Gallipolis Colony, by Rev. L. J. Kenney, S.J.)

<sup>7</sup> BADIN (*Un Témoin Oculaire*) *Origine et Progrès de la Mission du Kentucky*, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> GRAHAM, *History of Fairfield and Perry Counties, Ohio*, Part I, p. 45.

Christian Majesty of France to safeguard the religion of his former subjects. Be this as it may, although there was some emigration to this region, the great march westward, at first, took a more southerly course into Kentucky and Tennessee.

After the concession of independence to the confederated colonies, the mother country gave an example of that disingenuousness which has often characterized her actions. Although in the Treaty of Paris, September 3, 1783, Britain ceded all the western country south of the Great Lakes to the United States, under futile pretenses she continued to hold the forts in the north of this territory. Nor was this all. Hoping to regain the lost provinces, she not only encouraged the Indians in their warfare against the Americans, but furnished them ammunition and arms. For this reason, one must concur with the following assertion of Howe: "All the lives lost, the forts built, and the expeditions made in the northwest, from 1785 to 1794, are a continuation of the war of the Revolution against England."<sup>9</sup>

All this tended to retard the colonization of Ohio. In fact, not until the crushing defeat of the Indians by General Anthony Wayne in the western part of the state, August, 1794, was the white man there free from the danger of the scalping knife. Even after the treaty of peace with the Indians which followed in the next year, the British built Fort Miami on the Maumee, near the present Perrysburg, Wood County.

The presence of the English soldiers in this locality was the occasion of the temporary exercise of ministerial functions in northern Ohio by a priest of note.

<sup>9</sup> HOWE, *Historical Collections of Ohio*, I, 123.—Roosevelt (*The Winning of the West*, V, 226-227) characterizes the conduct of the British in the northwest at this period as black in the extreme.



In 1794, Rev. Edmund Burke, a native of Ireland, was sent to the northwest by the bishop of Quebec as administrator of Upper Canada. Before the close of the year he was on the Raisin River, Michigan, where he dedicated the church of Saint Anthony of Padua. But he soon took up his residence on the southern shores of Lake Erie, near Fort Miami. Here he attended the Pottawatomies and Chippewas. Father Burke's ministrations, however, were brief, ceasing with the withdrawal of the British soldiers whom he accompanied back to Canada. This was early in 1796. Thus the youthful United States were finally freed from foreign occupation. Burke subsequently became titular bishop of Sion and vicar apostolic of Nova Scotia.<sup>10</sup>

Great Britain's reprehensible course was, furthermore, a source of confusion in the ecclesiastical affairs of Quebec and Baltimore, of which Father Burke's mission is an instance. Prior to the Revolution, as has been stated, all the territory ceded to the United States west of the Alleghany Mountains and north of the Ohio River was subject to the see of Quebec. The thirteen original colonies were under the authority of the vicar apostolic of London. But in 1785 Father John Carroll was appointed prefect apostolic of the new republic; and on August 15, 1790, he was consecrated bishop of Baltimore. His jurisdiction was coterminous with the new-born country. Yet the occupation of American soil by British troops led the ordinary of Quebec to believe that the northwest was still a part of his diocese, and caused him to seek to supply it with missionaries. Nor was all doubt in the matter removed until the last English soldier was withdrawn.

<sup>10</sup> SHEA, *Life and Times of the Most Rev. John Carroll*, pp. 474-480; HOUCK, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

Such, in briefest outline, is the early history of the field of Father Edward Fenwick's future labors, together with the events that led to its discovery, and to its finally becoming a part of the great American republic. Of the white race Ohio had few at the close of the American Revolution. Among these there were perhaps no Catholics, with the exception of an odd Frenchman or Canadian, upon whose shoulders the cloak of religion sat loosely, and upon whose life it exercised but little beneficial influence. As yet the state had little history that is worth recording. Still we felt it incumbent upon us to give this chapter as a setting for the tireless Dominican's apostolate in the north. Certainly it will throw light upon the faithful toils of Ohio's apostle and first bishop, whose life and labors in the state are the corner-stone upon which its Catholic history is built.

From the time of the withdrawal of the British troops from its boundaries, Ohio rapidly increased in importance. Its population grew in leaps and bounds. Among the earliest settlers there appears to have been few, if any, Catholics. In time, however, appeals for spiritual guides from the scattered faithful who had taken up homesteads within its boundaries, attracted the attention of the ecclesiastical authorities, causing them to take steps for the succor of religion in the new state of the west. But to tell of this and of laying the foundations of the Church in that fair part of the Union will be the burden of the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XI

### MISSIONARY IN THE NORTH

FOR some years after Rev. Edmund Burke's return to Canada, no further effort, so far as is now known, was made to send Catholic missionaries into Ohio. Rev. Stephen T. Badin, however, returning to Kentucky from Maryland, stopped at Gallipolis late in 1807. Of his second visit there he writes Bishop Carroll: "On Christmas day I officiated at Gallipolis, where I found still a spark of faith. That settlement has much declined since I visited it first; but they assure me that there are many Irish Catholic families in the vicinity."<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, November 29, 1802, the territory of Ohio had been admitted to the rights of statehood, and the population of the new commonwealth was growing with marvellous rapidity. The situation of the few Catholics who found their way into its limits, deprived as they were of all spiritual succor, must have been distressing indeed. How keenly this bereavement was felt by Jacob Dittoe, one of the noblest early Catholic settlers in the state, may be seen from the following letter to Bishop Carroll.

LANCASTER [OHIO], January 5th, 1805.

*Rev. Sir:*

Since my arrival in this country, I wrote you, satisfied that every exertion would be made to establish a church in this part of the country, as it had been and is my greatest expectation in coming here. I must still press this subject upon you, not doubting

<sup>1</sup> Rev. S. T. Badin, Bardstown, Kentucky, to Bishop Carroll, January 7, 1808 (Baltimore Archives, Case 1, I 5).

but every means in your power will be used to that end. Every day's acquaintance in this country brings to my knowledge some of that profession tossed about through this country by the vicissitudes of fortune, deprived of the advantages of church communion; and [they are] extremely anxious for an establishment of that kind, and [to] contribute, as far as [lies] in their power to support it.

As you know that an appropriation of a piece of land would go to make an establishment of that kind more permanent than any other possession, I still hope that the contemplated application to Congress to that effect has been made with success; if not, a pre-emption (or the exclusive right of purchasing at two dollars per acre) might be granted. In either case, the object would be secured. I before sent you the number of [the] Section or Lot to be applied for, which is Section 21, in Township 17, and Range 17; if not the whole, the south half of which would answer a good purpose. There are of our profession in this place that I am acquainted with, about thirty souls. Two families of my acquaintance that will be here this ensuing spring, adding the probable migration from the neighborhood of Conawago under similar circumstances with me, (when I saw them), leave but little doubt with me but [that] a considerable congregation may be made here in a little time.

I have [no] information whether the authority may be depended upon as correct, that [says] an ordination of both Bishops and Priests will take place this spring, some of which, or of both, you design for Kentucky. If so, this place will be on their way to that country; and [I] write you directions [to give] to any that you would send to give us a call. I live near Lancaster, State of Ohio. Any person coming under such directions from you, will not only be directed where to find me, but gladly received by a Mr. Boyle of the said town, who with his family are of the same Church. I hope to hear from you soon, and . . . remain, with much respect, yours sincerely,

JACOB DITTOE.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Baltimore Archives, Case 3, D 7. In the reproduction of this and two other letters of Dittoe, given in this chapter, we have taken the liberty of correcting a few errors of the simple German farmer in spelling, punctuation and the misuse of three or four words. Other than this the documents are given as in the originals—in all their simple, quaint style.



The venerable prelate of Baltimore has noted on the back of this document the probability of being able to establish a church "north of the Ohio." In consequence of this correspondence, it would seem, a tract of land was secured from the United States Government for that purpose, but was suffered, through want of means, to lapse back into the public domain. The few Catholics of Ohio still remained without a pastor. Some of them, doubtless despairing of saving their souls in such a state of spiritual bereavement, appear either to have returned to the east, or to have moved to different parts of the west. Others probably gave up their religion. Brave Jacob Dittoe, however, lost neither his faith nor the hope of finally seeing a priest in the vicinity of his pioneer home. In the meantime he moved to near where now stands the town of Somerset, whence he wrote three years later:

*Dear Father and Vicar of Jesus Christ:*

I solicit your assistance the second time to make up the money to pay for the Church land. There are \$480.00 to be paid on or before the fourth day of June next, with \$58.00 interest; and in one year's time the land will be forfeited to the United [States], or paid [for] with \$160.00 interest. John Shorb and Henry Fink were with us one year ago. Mr. Shorb did say he believed there might some money be collected at Conawago, if any man would undertake it. Therefore I sent four subscription papers, of which you received one, John Mathias one, Henry Fink one, and Joseph Sneering one. Therefore please to let your word go unto them to exert themselves in gathering this sum of money, and not to suffer this noble tract of land to be lost, with the money paid thereon—or [to] any other that would advance a little money.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Jacob Dittoe, New Lancaster [Lancaster], Ohio, to Bishop Carroll, February 1, 1808 (Baltimore Archives, Case 3, D. 8).

He then proceeds to describe the land, which appears to have been a half section or tract of three hundred and twenty acres, as "the best of limestone land," and covered with "oak, hickory and walnut." Doubtless it was to make this plea the stronger that the staunch pioneer tells the bishop: "We will exert ourselves in making improvements on the said land. If you have any prospect of sending a priest, we will have a good house for him to go in, with a tenant," etc. The place will not be lonesome for a pastor, as it is only two miles from the National Highway, along which clergymen must frequently pass, in travelling between the east and the west. He himself now lives on the National Road, fourteen miles east of Lancaster. The bishop will kindly give this information to any priest he may instruct to pay a visit to that part of Ohio.

The reports, continues the loyal Teuton, that are said to be circulated in the east in regard to the unhealthy climate of Ohio, are untrue. Statistics prove it to have been more wholesome for the last three years than that of Maryland. Dittoe's own family has enjoyed splendid health; and the place where he now lives, and where the church land lies, is particularly salubrious.

On the reverse of this letter, Doctor Carroll has marked the communication as "Important," which inclines us to believe that, because of Dittoe's appeal, the bishop now wrote to his friend, Father Fenwick, requesting him to visit this desolate Catholic family, and to ascertain the feasibility of establishing a mission in the north. Be this as it may, before the close of 1808, the zealous friar had left his conventual home in Kentucky, and penetrated into the forests of Ohio.

The years 1808, 1810 and 1814 have all been assigned

as the date of Father Fenwick's earliest entrance into his northern mission. But the missionary himself, in a circular letter, dated December 13, 1823, and addressed to the people of Italy to obtain aid for the poor diocese over which he had lately been appointed bishop, gives a brief outline of his life and labors, and states expressly that he went into Ohio, for the first time, in 1808. The same statement is made no less positively in two other similar appeals, both of which belong to about the same time, and evidently emanated from the bishop himself. One is directed to the people of Spain, the other to the Catholics of England.<sup>4</sup> An accurate article on the missions of Ohio published in the *United States Catholic Miscellany*, February 24, 1827, gives us a similar story. The contributor to the *Miscellany* does not sign his name; but the style reveals Rev. N. D. Young, O.P., a nephew of the bishop, who was wont to write to its editor on the Church of that state. Father Young was one of the first novices at Saint Rose's, and none knew better than he the labors of his uncle in the north. In fact, 1808 is the date assigned to this event in more than one published account going back to the holy man's lifetime, or shortly after his death. We learn the same from an unbroken tradition in the Dominican Order

<sup>4</sup> We have before us a photostat copy of the appeal to the people of Italy. A rough draft of the one in Spanish is in the archives of the Dominican Master General (XIII, 731); while that to the Catholics of England is given in the *Catholic Miscellany*, London, IV, 428-432. The same date (1808) is found in a Flemish pamphlet which was printed at Antwerp, August, 1824, and contains an appeal in behalf of the new bishop. So again Spalding (*Life of Bishop Flaget*, page 202) tells us that a French account of the early missions in Ohio, published at Paris in 1824, gives 1808 as the year of Father Fenwick's first visit to that state. We are aware that several other accounts place that event in 1810; but their assertions seem to have come from one original error.

and among the Catholics of Perry County, the sphere of the friar's earliest ministrations in Ohio.<sup>5</sup>

From Father Badin's letters Bishop Carroll knew that the Dominican missionary intended going to Maryland during 1808.<sup>6</sup> Doubtless, therefore, he requested the friar to pass through Ohio on his way, to seek out the home of Jacob Dittoe, to administer to the Catholics he should find along the route, and to learn the prospects for the Church in that part of the west, that he might make a report on his arrival at Baltimore. The time of the journey can only be approximated. Fenwick's letter to Concanen from Lexington, July 10, 1808, proves that he was still in Kentucky. But a letter of Father Badin from the same state to Archbishop

<sup>5</sup> In the *Dominican Year Book*, 1913, pp. 89-90, we maintained that Fenwick's first visit to Ohio was most likely in 1810. Later researches, however, show that we were in error. Those who have given 1814 as the date of this event, have based their claims on a letter of the bishop to Father Badin in the London *Catholic Spectator*, I, 350-353. The *Spectator* (p. 351) makes the bishop say: "When I first came to the State of Ohio, 9 years ago, I discovered only three Catholic families from Limestone [the modern Maysville] to Wheeling." This document bears the date of 1823, and some have accordingly concluded that 1814 is the date of the Dominican's earliest visit to the northern missions. But in the face of the testimony given in the text it seems certain that the words "9 years ago" are an oversight, or a mechanical error. Certainly there was a good chance for such an error to occur. As the *Spectator's* heading shows, Badin made one document out of three of Fenwick's letters, dated respectively, Cincinnati, May 20, and Bordeaux, August 8, and 11, 1823. The English of the document leaves no doubt but that Fenwick wrote the letters in French, and that Badin translated them. We have before us photographs of a partial and a complete manuscript copy of Father Badin's translation. Both are in his own handwriting, bear the three dates given above, and show innumerable erasures and changes. Both differ quite noticeably, not only from one another, but from the *Spectator*. This shows that still a third translation was made and sent to England for publication. The translations which we photographed are in the diocesan archives of Louisville, Kentucky, and clearly indicate that the former missionary of that state made Fenwick's letters fit his own ideas. For other reasons in favor of placing the friar's first missionary duties in the north in 1808 see *The Catholic Historical Review*, IV, 22.

<sup>6</sup> In more than one of his letters Father Badin tells the bishop that Fenwick intends going to Baltimore.



Carroll, October 7, 1808, shows that the friar was then in Baltimore, or on his way thither.<sup>7</sup>

Another unbroken tradition, both in the Order and among the Catholics of Perry County, Ohio, gives us the following circumstance of the discovery of the sturdy German family. It tells us that as the missionary passed along the road, he heard the sound of an axe in the forest. Turning his horse in the direction whence the sound came, he soon arrived at the home of Jacob Dittoe. Indeed, this incident is recorded in nearly all the earlier sketches of the bishop's life and of the Church in Ohio.<sup>8</sup>

In the circular letter to the people of Italy, the bishop says that on this occasion he discovered three German Catholic families (that is, of German extraction), comprising twenty persons in all. They had not seen a priest for ten or twelve years. Deprived for so long a time of the consolations of their holy religion, their joy at seeing a priest among them was inexpressible. They regarded Father Fenwick as a messenger sent by heaven for their salvation.<sup>9</sup> But the happiness caused the state's future apostle and ordinary by the discovery of the little flock he had thus chanced upon, was not less than that of the good people. To the day of his death, we are told, he cherished the memory of this event as the

<sup>7</sup> Archives of the Dominican Master General, Codex XIII, 731; and the Baltimore Archives, Case 1, I 11.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Dittoe, still living, has told the writer more than once that he often heard his father, who was a son of Jacob Dittoe and a boy fifteen years of age at the time of Father Fenwick's first visit to Ohio, give the old traditionary story of how the missionary discovered the Catholic pioneer's home near Somerset.

<sup>9</sup> Substantially the same statements are made in the Spanish and English appeals.



FATHER FENWICK DISCOVERING THE DITTOE FAMILY



beginning of his apostolic labors in the north, and could not speak of it without shedding tears.<sup>10</sup>

Jacob Dittoe had moved, at an earlier date, from Pennsylvania to Frederick, Maryland, whence he migrated to Ohio, eventually settling on a farm a mile and a half or two miles from the present town of Somerset.<sup>11</sup> It was at this latter place that Father Fenwick found him, and said his first mass in Ohio. Another of the three families was that of John Finck, a brother-in-law of Dittoe. Finck had come directly from Pennsylvania, and taken up his pioneer home in what is now the east end of Somerset. The identity of the third family is shrouded in some obscurity, but was likely either that of Anthony Dittoe, a brother of Jacob, or that of Joseph Finck, son of the aforesaid John Finck. The elder Finck had not yet entered the Church. His wife and children were staunchly Catholic. Their descendants, like those of the Dittoes, are numerous in Ohio, and are to be found in other parts of the country. Everywhere they continue, as a rule, true to the faith, and retain the traditions of which we have spoken.

At that time, Father Fenwick had been but lately released, at his own request, from the position of superior over the little band of Dominicans he had led out to Kentucky two years before. Freed from this burden, and eager to gather souls to Christ, wherever they might be found, the man of God promised the newly discovered little flock in the wilds of Ohio that he would visit them occasionally, and administer to the needs of their souls. Doubtless this also was the request of Doctor Carroll and the will of his own provincial; for we read

<sup>10</sup> *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, VI, 135; *The Catholic Telegraph*, II, 86.

<sup>11</sup> A descendant of the family still lives on the original homestead.



that it was at the wish of his bishop and superior that the missionary undertook to attend the Catholics of Ohio. Tradition, in this connection, has erroneously substituted the ordinary of Bardstown for the ordinary of Baltimore.

Father Fenwick's zeal and charity, as has been stated, led him by preference to direct his efforts to the scattered faithful and the remote sections that were rarely, if ever, visited by an ambassador of Christ. However, his ministerial duties in Kentucky and the office of syndic which he held at the struggling convent and college lately erected in that state, combined with the long rides on horseback to and from Ohio to make the friar's visits to his northern missions less frequent than he had hoped. To one of his well-known zeal, for he was in every sense a man of God, this inability to attend his distant flocks more regularly must have been the cause of deep regret.

But a well-defined tradition still existing in Perry County and other portions of the state where Catholicity obtained an early hold, as well as in his Order, tells us that the hard-working missionary made two excursions a year to keep the faith alive in the north. It is even so stated in written accounts that date back almost to his lifetime. A letter of Jacob Dittoe to Archbishop Carroll, dated August 19, 1810, shows that the holy man was in Ohio that year, or in 1809, if not in both. And persistent tradition informs us that it was in 1810 that Father Fenwick said, in the house of John Finck, the first mass ever offered up in the present town of Somerset, then an incipient village known as Middletown, because of its central location between Zanesville and Lancaster.

Dittoe's brief letter deserves insertion here, because it

reveals the staunch faith of the little band of Catholics of whom its author appears to have been the leader in things spiritual. The document further shows the difficulties our early Catholic settlers had often to contend against, and the causes of many defections from the Church in former days. The spirit of its writer, an honest farmer, cannot fail to appeal to the reader:

*Dear Father:*—[he writes]

We have understood from Mr. Finnic [that is, Father Fenwick]<sup>12</sup> that there was a bishop going on to Kentucky, and we desire you to inform him of this place, a settlement of Roman Catholicks, twenty-two miles from Zanesville towards Lancaster, and fourteen miles from the latter, which will be a place of rest and refreshment. For there are some young Catholicks in this place that do wish to join in marriage, [and] that are waiting upon the head of his coming, as it is a point of some importance. And should he not come, we will thank you to write to us, whether they will be allowed to be joined together by an Esquire who is also a Roman Catholick, or not. [Do so] as soon as possible, if he should not come.

I am, dear Father, yours, etc.

JACOB DITTOE.<sup>13</sup>

More than likely the missionary had recently visited the little settlement en route to New York to meet and welcome his friend, Bishop Concanen. In the east, as the reader has seen, Father Fenwick became dangerously ill. But as soon as he regained sufficient strength, he began his long homeward journey. The next year we find the indefatigable friar again at his work of saving souls in Ohio, whence he passed on to Maryland, possibly in part to console the scattered faithful in the

<sup>12</sup> The name was formerly pronounced as if it were spelled Finnic. It is still so pronounced in England.

<sup>13</sup> Baltimore Archives, Case 8 A, F 4.

northwestern neck of that state, to whom he administered more than once during the course of his missionary career. It was on this occasion, as has been stated, that he joined Bishop Flaget at Pittsburgh and piloted the episcopal retinue down the Ohio River.

This was in May, 1811. Possibly our friar made another missionary tour to the north before the close of that year. But it is certain that, about this time, there was a break in his visits. Indeed, it would appear that the long interval between them drew a letter of inquiry from the staunch Teutonic Catholic, to which the following document is a reply:

ROSE HILL, near Springfield, Washington County, [Kentucky],  
May 25, [1812].<sup>14</sup>

MR. DITTOE.

*Dear Sir:—*

Yours of the 9th inst. is before me. I am sorry you have been so much disappointed, and so long neglected, and am the more sorry that it is not in my power to visit you at present, having my hands and head all full. But take courage and patience a little longer, and you shall be comforted. I will be with you, if possible, in August, or September at latest. The Bishop of Kentucky will also be with you, and between us both we can surely satisfy you, and give you all advice, etc. necessary.

I have built a large church here one hundred and ten by forty feet—all brick; and am building a dwelling-house, or college, about eighty feet long. Have just finished a new saw-mill and a grist-mill, and have actually three companies of workmen about me, carpenters, bricklayers, all lodged and boarded—besides a large plantation and six congregations to attend to. Thus you see I have no time now to spare. I have mentioned you all to the good Bishop. He pities you, and will do his best to provide for you.

<sup>14</sup> The letter itself does not give the year; but it is found in the post mark.

My best wishes to all your family and friends, and am, dear Sir, yours, etc.

EDWARD FENWICK.<sup>15</sup>

Bishop Flaget was to pass through Ohio en route to a council that was to be held in Baltimore. Fenwick was to accompany him as far as Somerset, and perhaps to the east. But owing to the well-known misunderstanding between Father Badin and his ordinary in regard to the church lands in Kentucky, the bishop decided to take that missionary along with him, in the hope that the affair might be amicably settled through the intermediation of mutual friends, or perhaps by the assembled bishops. Accordingly, Father Fenwick remained at home to attend his missions there, as the other two ecclesiastics could take his place in Ohio.

At Lexington, Father Fenwick met Bishop Flaget, then on his eastward journey, and perhaps gave him instructions about the roads and where he would find Catholics. The prelate records this meeting in his diary, and says of the friar: "I admire the prudence of my dear friend. . . . I appreciate, and am thankful for the friendship he bears me."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Archives of Saint Joseph's Priory, Somerset, Ohio.

<sup>16</sup> Bishop Flaget's diary for 1812 ("Diary of my Trip to Baltimore").—In the preface to his life of Bishop Flaget, Bishop Spalding tells us that the pioneer prelate kept a diary from 1812 to 1834. All its volumes seem now to be lost, excepting that for 1812 which the writer discovered, some years ago, in the library of the former seminary at Preston Park, Louisville. We took it to Bishop O'Donaghue. It is now at Notre Dame University. Rev. W. J. Howlett has since translated it from French into English for the *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia* (See Vol. XXIX of same, *passim*).—In the account of this journey to Baltimore Bishop Flaget speaks rather disparagingly of the zeal of Father Robert A. Angier, O.P. But it must be remembered that the bishop and Angier, just as the bishop and Father Badin, were often not in accord. And this, at times, sufficed to cause that prelate, pious as he was, to sharpen his pen. Angier's health of both body and mind, as will be seen, had begun to give way under the stress of his labors and loneliness.



As the travellers approached Lancaster, Father Badin, the good prelate's diary informs us, called out in every direction that they were priests, hoping that his voice might reach the ear of some lonely Catholic. It was on October 9, 1812, that they arrived at the home of Jacob Dittoe which was also an inn. There they appear to have sojourned for several days. Dittoe, as the diary further informs us, had purchased three hundred and twenty acres of land which he intended to bestow upon the Church, and had built a house for a parochial residence. Thus it would seem, from the bishop's diary and a search of the land records at the National Capital, that the good man, failing to secure the assistance which he had sought in behalf of a church, finally determined to defray himself the expenses of the holy enterprise, and bought other property in his own name.<sup>17</sup> The prelate's notes also show the slow growth of Catholicity in the north. Four years before, Father Fenwick had discovered but three Catholic families from Maysville to Wheeling. Bishop Flaget and his companion found only ten or twelve along the same route. From this we infer that likely Dittoe was mistaken in the estimate of the number of those belonging to the faith given in his letter of 1805; or that, as has been stated, some of the prospective settlers, in despair of seeing a priest in their midst, did not long remain in Ohio.

Owing to lack of documents, it is not now possible to determine the precise date of Father Fenwick's next

<sup>17</sup> Flaget's diary says that Jacob Dittoe purchased this land conjointly with his brother. But we think the bishop's assertion erroneous. The Land Records, Washington, D. C., Chillicothe Division, Miscellaneous, Vol. 30, p. 246, show that Jacob Dittoe alone obtained from the government the property on which Saint Joseph's Church and Priory now stand; and it was he who, some years later, deeded it to Father Fenwick.

pastoral visit to the north. Indeed, we know of the frequency of his tours for the two or more ensuing years mostly from tradition. Through this medium, however, we learn that the missionary sought at least to make semiannual visitations of the Catholic settlements in Ohio.<sup>18</sup> But the letter which we shall now produce, shows that he had become better acquainted with the people and the country; that the faithful had increased in numbers; that further steps had been taken towards the erection of a church; and that preparations were under way for the missionary to reside with his anxious flock. Hitherto he had been prevented from putting this latter design into execution by the multiplicity of his duties in Kentucky. Now an unforeseen occurrence not only threatened to thwart his hopes, but increased his labors almost to the breaking point.

Father Robert A. Angier's health had given way under the strain and loneliness of his extensive missions in northern Kentucky, and his confrère was obliged to add the care of these to his already overpowering burden. Accordingly, August 6, 1815, he writes from Georgetown, that state:

MESSRS. DITTOE, FATHER AND SONS—one and all.

I received Peter's kind and friendly letter. Am sorry to hear of poor Jacob's low situation.<sup>19</sup> He must resign himself to God's will; and be humble and penitent. And I hope he will obtain mercy and life everlasting.

I would have been glad, merely for the information of others, to know the quantity and quality of congress land for sale near the salt springs, as I intend to set out about the 10th of next September, to see you all, and to go by Cincinnati. You may

<sup>18</sup> It is stated in several documents from Fenwick, or inspired by him, that he visited the north twice a year.

<sup>19</sup> This was evidently Jacob Dittoe, junior.

expect me between the 20th and 30th of that month, if nothing unforeseen stops me. I wish you to enquire after the Catholics of Newark and Owl Creek—both places in Fairfield County. I have heard the names of Major, Logan, Arnold, Baker and McKinsey. I have seen some of their relatives. You will continue to let them know that I am to be in your neighbourhood for a week or so—and also those on Walnut Creek. I shall not have time to stay long with you or anywhere else, as I have great concerns this way. The priest who lived here and attended these upper counties, is become sickly—helpless. So all his charge and labor have fallen on me, besides my affairs at home. This may frustrate, or at least retard, my settling among you. At any rate, it will afford you time to get the place and church, etc., all prepared. I shall expect my proposals to be entirely complied with. My compliments and best wishes to the old lady, and to all, old and young, without exception, but especially to Joseph Dittoe and family, whilst I remain your obedient Servant,

EDWARD FENWICK.<sup>20</sup>

Bishop Spalding, supposing Father Fenwick to have been first selected and sent by Doctor Flaget to take charge of the Catholics in Ohio, declares: "The prelate could not have made a better choice. Father Fenwick was admirably suited for the post of pioneer missionary in a new region, through whose waving forests Catholics were at that early day but thinly scattered." Following Bishop Flaget's diary, the same author says that in 1815 the friar "visited Cincinnati, Chillicothe, and many other parts of the State."<sup>21</sup>

For a time, it would seem, there were little hopes of Father Angier's recovery. But by the close of 1815, he began to improve; and the next year, the provincial,

<sup>20</sup> Archives of Saint Joseph's Priory, Somerset.—The original of this letter is lost. We have used a copy, lately discovered, in the handwriting of Rev. Stephen Byrne, O.P.

<sup>21</sup> *Life, Times and Character of the Right Rev. Benedict Joseph Flaget*, p. 203.

Rev. S. T. Wilson, decided to send him back to Maryland. It was thought that the invalid priest might not only be able to render some service on the less lonely missions of the more populous state, but ultimately regain his health. Father Fenwick, therefore, availed himself of his confrère's journey to the east to have the spiritual needs of his northern flock attended to, in the spring of 1816, without leaving his work in Kentucky. Accordingly, writing to Jacob Dittoe, April 20, 1816, he says:

I received my friend Henry's letter of —, what date I forget. I cannot tell now even when I shall be able to visit you again, as I am much engaged. When the music which Henry mentions is to be had, I will procure it. Meanwhile, I can inform you that there is a prospect of a priest coming your way, Rev. Mr. Angier, my friend and fellow-traveler from Europe, who lives with me, will set out from this about [the] first of May for Maryland, etc., travelling for his health, and will probably stop with you, as I shall ask him; also at Uncle Joe's, where he can rest himself well. He will say Mass and render all the services I could. Perhaps he will even go to Canton with Peter, if he wishes it, and do all that I could. You will please to give notice to all the Catholics who may wish to profit of Mr. Angier's services, especially about Lancaster. And don't forget Mr. Delong. If Mr. Angier does not stay long enough with you, let me know when he is gone, and if it will be in my power, about September next, I will come to see you all. Meanwhile, I am, as usual, in haste,

Your obedient servant and well-wisher,

E. FENWICK.<sup>22</sup>

However, as Doctor Spalding, following Bishop

<sup>22</sup> Archives of Saint Joseph's Priory.—This letter does not give the year in which it was written. But a letter of Rev. N. D. Young to Nicholas Young, his father (District of Columbia), dated Saint Rose's, May 5, 1816 (Archives of Saint Joseph's Province) shows that it belongs to 1816. This may also be seen from a letter of Rev. S. T. Wilson, O.P., Saint Rose's, to the superior of the Jesuit Fathers, Maryland, May 5, 1816 (Archives of the New York-Maryland Province of the Jesuit Fathers, Case 205, Z 17).



Flaget's diary, informs us, Father Fenwick also made a missionary tour through the state later in that year, and reported to his ordinary "that at least four priests were then needed in Ohio."<sup>23</sup> It was fortunate, therefore, that affairs were soon so to shape themselves that the hard-working priest could make his home in the midst of his northern labors. For writing to a friend in London, England, November 8, 1818, he says: "It is now two years since I have lived at the Convent of Saint Rose's, in Kentucky."<sup>24</sup> In September, 1816, four Dominican students who had been selected for the Order by the holy friar himself, were raised to the priesthood by Bishop Flaget in the church of Saint Rose. It was the first ordination of Friars Preacher in the United States, and was probably hastened somewhat by the provincial in order to enable Father Fenwick to give his whole attention to the missions of Ohio.

The young clerygmen thus added to the missionary band of the west were Revs. Richard P. Miles, later the first bishop of Nashville, Stephen H. Montgomery, Samuel L. Montgomery, and William T. Willett. Fathers Willett and S. L. Montgomery were sent to the districts that had been under the charge of Rev. Robert A. Angier. The former was stationed at Lexington, whence he attended various places. The latter made Saint Francis', now Saint Pius', Scott County, the center of his apostolic activities. Fathers Miles and S. H. Montgomery remained at the convent to help with the college and on the missions nearer home.

In this way, Father Fenwick, although his services could even then ill be spared, was at length enabled to take up his abode in the midst of his northern flocks.

<sup>23</sup> *Life of Bishop Flaget*, p. 203.

<sup>24</sup> *Diario di Roma*, January 23, 1819.

For some years prior to his settling there, the missionary's lonesome rides had extended from central Kentucky to Maysville or Cincinnati, and thence on to Chillicothe, the present Somerset, Canton, and Youngstown or Pittsburgh, or perhaps even to Cleveland. All his journeys were on horseback; and at times he probably travelled a thousand or more miles before returning home. Although he was now freed from all duties in the south, neither his ridings nor his labors were lessened.

A former page has told of Father Badin's lonely life in Kentucky, when he was the only priest in the state. That of Father Fenwick in Ohio was still more solitary. In Kentucky, the early Catholic colonists ordinarily sought to form settlements composed principally of those belonging to their Church. In Ohio, there was little of such concerted action among this class of pioneer settlers. They came from all places, and made their homes in all directions. This not only necessitated long and more frequent journeys for their pastor, but oftener deprived him of the companionship of those of his own faith, and caused his life to be at once more trying and more solitary than had been that of Kentucky's lone missionary. From his nephew, Father Young, we learn that at this time he contracted the habit of smoking, in which he found much solace during the dreary nights, or when wending his way through the gloomy forests.<sup>25</sup>

No distance, no condition of weather, or of the primitive roads, no extremes of heat or cold dampened the ardor of the earnest ambassador of Christ. Wherever there were Catholics to be found, thither he directed his course, frequently threading his way along bridle-paths, or through tangled forests. Often would he ride

<sup>25</sup> *The Freeman's Journal* (New York), December 7, 1878.

fifty or more miles out of his course in search of some individual or family, whose name suggested that they should be of the fold. It was such as these that he was wont principally to designate as "stray sheep." Many times, and at all seasons of the year, as he himself tells us, was he overtaken by night and hopelessly lost in the unbroken forests, then the home of wild beasts. On these occasions, the holy man recommended himself to God, fastened or hobbled his horse, and lay down to sleep, with the saddle as his pillow, the bare earth as his bed and no protection but that of heaven.

The same humility and self-sacrifice, the same holiness of life and spirit of poverty, the same unpretentious and winning ways, the same thoughtfulness of others and gentlemanly manners and the same open, frank candor that had always characterized the missionary's life, and made his labors so fruitful in Kentucky, marked his course in Ohio. Here also he displayed the same tireless energy, exercised the same influence over all classes, whether Catholic or non-Catholic, and showed the same genius for reaching the heart and making conversions of which a previous page has told.

In 1817, Doctor Spalding informs us again, Father Fenwick reported to his bishop that he had visited Gallipolis, where he found many persons eighteen years of age who had not been baptized. He also discovered sixteen Catholic families, "at no great distance from the town."<sup>26</sup> So he went ever on widening the field of his labors, and carrying salvation to others, while he himself was obliged to ride hundreds of miles to find one to minister to the needs of his own soul. But he was now to have associated with him a young kinsman and confrère who was to be a rival in apostolic zeal.

<sup>26</sup> *Life of Bishop Flaget*, pp. 203-204.

## CHAPTER XII

### A COMPANION AT LABOR

FATHER FENWICK and his faithful horse had now become familiar objects in many parts of Ohio. Back and forth he had traversed the state in every direction, carrying in his saddle-bags, then an indispensable article for every pioneer country priest, vestments, altar-stone and all other requisites for the mass and the sacraments. Everywhere, the missionary's honest face and affable manners opened for him the way to many hearts, and helped to win numerous souls to God. Catholic immigration was rapidly increasing. The numbers of the faithful, together with their widely separated situations, not only overwhelmed him, but made it impossible to attend to all their spiritual needs.

In the midst of these oppressive toils, came the cheering news that his nephew, Rev. Nicholas Dominic Young, O.P., was soon to be raised to the priesthood. The missionary's joy was all the greater, because the new priest, whose piety gave much promise, was to join in his labors at the north. Father Young was ordained on December 18, 1817. But in those hardy days of great harvest and few laborers there was little time to be lost in celebration, whatever the event. Likely, indeed, the earnest Fenwick could not leave his northern missions even for the ordination of his kinsman. For the same reason, the consecrating oils were hardly dry on the youthful priest's hands, before he was on his way to Ohio to aid in his uncle's apostolate.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Spalding is in error when he says (*Life of Bishop Flaget*, p. 204) that Father Young "went to Ohio for the first time, in November, 1818."



Although Father Fenwick's labors were now divided with his nephew, his zeal relaxed not. His hardships were not lessened; nor were his efforts to gain souls for Christ diminished. Indeed, the two missionaries were obliged to multiply themselves, in order to attend to the spiritual wants of their ever increasing flocks.

It was fortunate, therefore, that both these friars were men of indomitable will, tireless energy, and unquenchable thirst to extend the kingdom of God. Their apostolic ministry knew no surcease—permitted no repose or rest. Fenwick's labors in the north have justly won for him the title of "Apostle of Ohio." Those of Young, extending as they did over a period of nearly five and thirty years, merit for him the honor of co-apostle of the same state.

Prior to the advent of the younger missionary into that portion of the Lord's vineyard, Father Fenwick's time had been too much taken up with the ministry to permit him to erect a temple of prayer in honor of the God whom he served so faithfully. Now, however, he was enabled to give more attention to this need of the Church under his care. But we cannot do better than let the holy man tell, in his own interesting way, of his early toils and trials both in Ohio and in Kentucky. Writing from Georgetown, D. C., to a friend in London, England, November 8, 1818, he says:

It is now two years since I have lived in the Convent of Saint Rose in Kentucky, having become, as they call me here, an itinerant preacher. I am continually occupied in traversing these immense tracts of country, either in search of stray sheep or to distribute the "bread of angels" to thousands of persons who live scattered about in these our vast solitudes. The whole state of Ohio and a part of Kentucky, from Frankfort, Lexington

and Richmond to Cincinnati, Canton, and on to Cleveland on Lake Erie, are the places to which I make my apostolic travels, not neglecting the adjacent counties and cities. In the State of Ohio, which has a population of 500,000 souls, there is not a single priest [that is, not a single secular priest, or a priest with a home of his own]. There are Germans and Irish who know no English at all. Hence you can well imagine the efforts I have to make to be understood by them and to understand them; and the pains I have to take in order to give them some little spiritual help. It often happens that I am compelled to traverse vast and inhospitable forests, wherein not a trace of a road is to be seen. Not infrequently, overtaken by night in the midst of these, I am obliged to hitch my horse to a tree; and, making a pillow of my saddle, I recommend myself to God and go to sleep, with bears on all sides. However, our Lord in His mercy lightens these trying experiences for me, and sweetens them with sensible consolations. A short time ago, a colony of thirteen families, having by chance found a Catholic book, conceived the desire of embracing our holy religion; and, although I was three hundred miles away, they wrote me a letter, in which they made their desire known to me. I made my way to this colony, which I had the good fortune to find, instructed them all in those things that are necessary to be known, and had the consolation of baptizing them. The people in general are anxious to learn, and disposed to receive the Word of God with docility. What a pity, though, that there are so few laborers. Our Convent of Saint Rose is not without its needs, and the community is not large enough to send missionaries to such distant places. Our five newly ordained priests, by their piety and talents, do honor to the Order and Religion. . . .<sup>2</sup>

In this, as in all his letters, the future bishop seeks to cloak his piety and zeal. But before this time, as has

<sup>2</sup> *Diario di Roma*, January 23, 1819.—The *Diario* says simply that this letter was written to a gentleman in London. We fancy that the gentleman was John Hill who had just gone to Rome to enter the Order of Saint Dominic. Only extracts of the letter are published in the *Diario*. We could not find the original, and were thus obliged to translate back into English a transcript lately made for us from the *Diario*.

been stated, he had been joined in his arduous labors by his fellow-religious and kinsman. Hence, having told his London friend that the fathers of Saint Rose's, in Kentucky, in addition to a college and a "large congregation" there, "have the care of six distant missions," he proceeds to say:

I am at present in charge of the mission of Saint Joseph's with a young confrère [Rev. N. D. Young]. I built that new church, and hope before long to establish a convent there. Besides, I am building another church and convent at Lancaster, Fairfield County, three hundred acres of land having been given to me for that purpose. . . .<sup>3</sup> I have been obliged, to my great sorrow, to refuse other similar offers for want of missionaries. Pray the Lord to inspire some pious and zealous priests with the holy resolution to come and join us in order to co-operate in such a meritorious work, and to propagate the light of our holy faith among people whose only desire is to be instructed. I must not conceal from you that we are in need of sacred vessels, vestments, missals, and everything required that the Divine Services may be conducted with due decorum and reverence.

The convent at Lancaster, owing to poverty, the scarcity of priests and their manifold labors, was never completed. About the same time, or a little later, preparations were begun for a third temple of prayer just outside the confines of Cincinnati, where religious intolerance or penury (perhaps both) seems to have made it more prudent not to attempt to build a Catholic church within the municipal limits. Indeed, the expression "*sopra l'Ohio*" (on the Ohio), found in the rendition of Fenwick's letter into Italian for the *Diario*

<sup>3</sup> While it seems certain that Father Fenwick hoped to build a convent at Lancaster, it does not appear that he obtained nearly so much land there. For this reason, we are of the opinion that the translator for the *Diario di Roma*, unacquainted with the geography of Ohio, confused this property with that at Somerset given to Fenwick by Jacob Dittoe, of which we shall soon speak.

*di Roma*, would suggest that the missionary mentioned this place also and that it was overlooked in the translation. But as we shall speak of Catholicity in Cincinnati in the following chapter, suffice it here to say that this church was opened to the faithful in the spring of 1819, and dedicated to the apostle of Ireland, Saint Patrick. To that of Lancaster, which must have been completed about the same time, was given the name of Saint Mary in honor of the Mother of God.<sup>4</sup>

Both these temples of worship have been described as plain, barn-like structures of plank. The dimensions of Saint Patrick's are variously given as forty-five feet by thirty and fifty-five feet by thirty or thirty-five. Saint Mary's was somewhat smaller. Both were without ceiling and unplastered. Although small, unpretentious and showing the poverty of the pioneer settlers, no doubt they were judged large enough to accommodate the faithful for some years to come, and compared favorably with the churches of other denominations; for Catholics, be they ever so poor, are zealous for their house of God. Certainly they were elegant enough not merely to satisfy, but even to delight the few scattered Catholics.

Jacob Dittoe's staunch faith was at last rewarded, and his measure of happiness filled to overflowing, by the residence of a priest near his home, and a church, humble though it was, erected on the land which he longed to see consecrated to the service of God. The good man had purchased from the government, August 19, 1809, a half section, about two miles from the present Somerset, which he intended to dedicate to this holy purpose. Now, with the consent of Bishop Flaget, he

<sup>4</sup> This shows that Saint Mary's, Lancaster, dates back to 1819, instead of 1820, the date usually found in print.



transferred it to the Order to which the missionaries belonged. The deed, bearing the date of May 23, 1818, and signed by Jacob Dittoe and his wife Catherine, tells us that the land is bestowed forever upon "the Rev'd Edward Fenwick of Saint Thomas' College, in Washington County, in the State of Kentucky, . . . for and in consideration of the friendship and confidence which they entertain for and in the said Edward Fenwick;" and that it is assigned, granted and confirmed "unto the said Reverend Edward Fenwick and his successors, and by him and them to be owned, held and possessed, willed and remised forever, for the use and benefit of the Roman Catholic Church in the said county of Perry." . . .<sup>5</sup>

Saint Joseph's Church, built on this land, was completed a little before those of Saint Mary and Saint Patrick. It was an humble affair of logs twenty-two feet in length by eighteen in width, covered with clapboards, and of the same character as the ordinary home of the pioneer settlers in the country. The bare ground served for a floor, while openings in the side-walls answered for windows. Means of heating it had none. But a little log structure called the "warming house" stood near by, and was long a boon, during the winter months, for the backwoodsmen who came from afar, before they entered the church, and before they started on their homeward journey.<sup>6</sup> Like its younger sisters at Lancaster and Cincinnati, Saint Joseph's was bare

<sup>5</sup> Bishop Flaget says in his diary that Jacob Dittoe purchased this land conjointly with his brother. This seems to be an error. Only Jacob's name appears in the purchase of the property from the government (Land Office, Washington, D. C.), or in the deed to Fenwick.

<sup>6</sup> The dimensions of Saint Joseph's Church are given in a letter of Bishop Fenwick to Father Badin (*Annales*, III, 291). The warming house was still spoken of by the old people in the student days of the writer.

of ornamentation, and lacked everything conducive to comfort. It seems to have been slow in building, possibly in part because of the frequent and long absences of the two missionaries. When it was begun there appears to have been only ten Catholic families in the settlement for which it was erected. Its dimensions were made accordingly. But by the time of its completion, as we learn from a letter of Rev. N. D. Young to his father, the influx of those of the faith, especially from around Conewago, Pennsylvania, had so increased the congregation that the church was much too small.

From the same source we learn that, in the fall of this year, the two missionaries travelled on to Maryland. Doubtless they attended the Catholics along the way both there and back. Young's purpose in this journey was to visit his parents, whom, it would seem, he had not seen since his ordination. Fenwick's was no doubt to procure a few necessities for his new churches. It was on this occasion that he wrote the letter to his friend in London of which we have spoken.

Young reached Somerset, on his return, in the last days of November. But Fenwick, detained longer by his priestly ministrations, did not join him until the third of December. Three days later they blessed and opened Saint Joseph's for divine service. The impressive event, which marks an era in the history of the Catholic Church in Ohio, took place on Sunday, December 6, 1818, and drew from miles around a large and curious audience of every shade of religious belief.<sup>7</sup> To those of the faith it was an occasion of joy and gratification. But the happiness of the good Catholic people at

<sup>7</sup> Rev. N. D. Young, Saint Joseph's, Somerset, Ohio, to Nicholas Young, Nonesuch, near Washington City, December 4, 1818 (Archives of Saint Joseph's Priory); baptismal records of Saint Joseph's Church, Somerset.

finally having a church in their midst, small and humble as it was, was not greater than that of Fathers Fenwick and Young who officiated at the solemn ceremony.

Thus was blessed and dedicated to the divine Master Ohio's oldest Catholic Church, the first fruit of the zealous Dominican's apostolic labors in that commonwealth; and the mother (in a sense) of all the ecclesiastical institutions, great and small, that now grace the state in its length and breadth. No matter for wonder, then, that the tender-hearted prelate could not speak of his discovery of the three Catholic families near the present Somerset without his eyes filling with tears. The discovery was the nativity of the Church in Ohio; Perry County its cradle; Edward Dominic Fenwick its apostle. Of this shrine of religion the Catholic paper of Columbus says:

Here in our own State [is a] center of Catholic piety . . . that, in other States, would have made Catholicism famous and honored. At old St. Joseph's priory and novitiate, in Perry county, the Dominicans have a historic shrine that should draw the heart of every Catholic of Ohio, for St. Joseph's was largely the cradle of Catholicity in Ohio. From its rude log church rode forth with scrip and saddle-bags the brave Dominican Fathers who, in the forests yet unhewn by the axe of the immigrant and yet echoing to the whoop of the red man and the voice of the panther and the wolf, laid the foundation of the Church in Ohio.<sup>8</sup>

Along with the church of Saint Joseph's arose an humble convent, built that the fathers might have a home of their own in which to spend their few moments of leisure. Blessed at the same time as the diminutive house of worship, it too was placed under the patronage of the foster-father of our Lord. Like the church, this

<sup>8</sup> *The Catholic Columbian*, June 9, 1916.

pioneer monastery was a log structure. Tradition tells us that it was two rooms in length and a story and a half in height. An additional room in the rear, one story high, served as a kitchen. Like the church again, the convent was bare of ornament, with the exception of a fine oil-painting of the "Descent from the Cross," which had been presented to Father Fenwick by Archbishop Carroll as a token of esteem, and which the missionary first took to Kentucky, but afterwards carried to his mission in Ohio. This object of art, still cherished at Saint Joseph's in memory of the institution's founder, hung on the crude wall of the parlor, and was an object of wonder for the simple pioneer settlers. Not only had the fathers, during the rare intervals they were at the convent, to rest content with few comforts; often were they without things considered as necessities of life even in that hardy day. Yet the missionaries were joyous in the possession of the rude house they could call home, and in the realization that their labors for the good of religion bore rich fruit.

The only thing about the priest's pioneer home of which one could boast, was its location. But Father Young, always more zealous for the glory of God and the salvation of souls than solicitous for personal comforts, thus writes of it:

We commenced housekeeping yesterday in a comfortable log-house, tho' no ways furnished as yet beyond what is absolutely necessary. It is surrounded with large trees of almost every sort so that we have a good collection to choose out of for shade [and] ornament for the yard. The situation is very handsome, being on a gradual eminence. At present the view [is] much obstructed, but will be extensive when the place and country about [are] opened. I think that in the course of a few years we shall make it a very pleasant place. All we shall want will be money

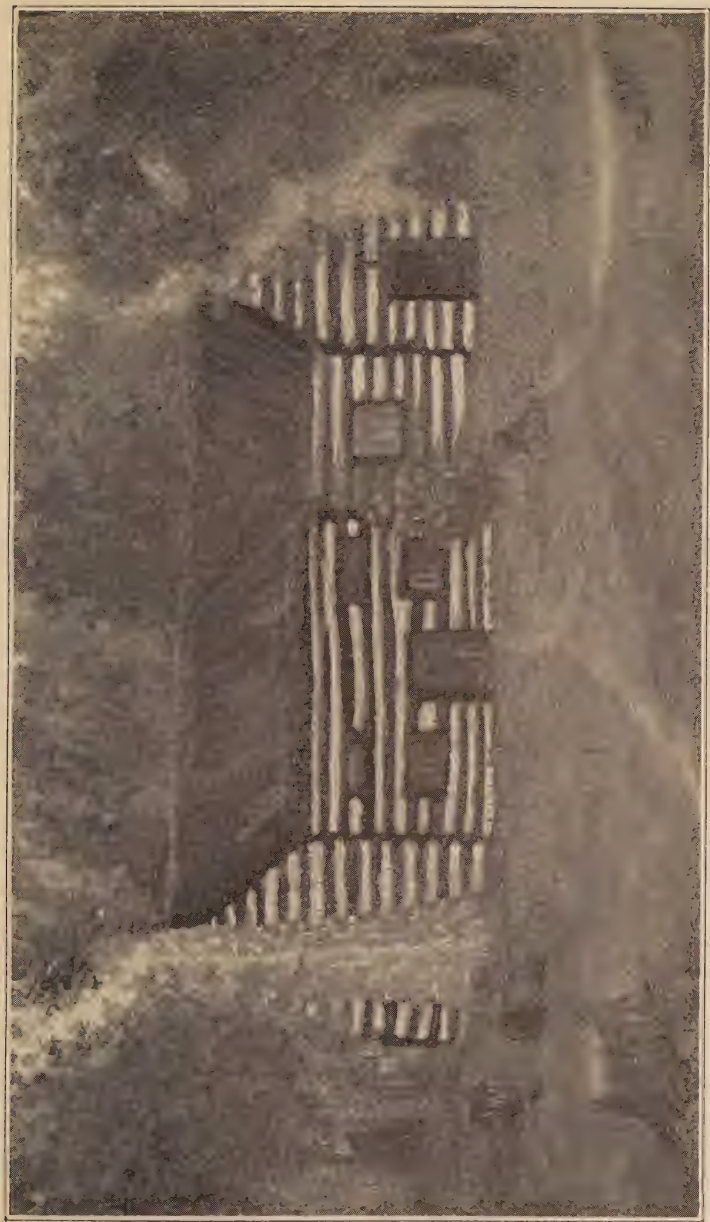


sufficient to enable us to erect good buildings. As for ourselves, we can do very well with the present house as long as the family remains small. But the church is what I allude to. That is what we shall want in the very beginning. The one that is now finished and adjoining the house, besides being of rough logs, is entirely too small to contain the present congregation which is almost double in number to what it was when I passed this place last Spring, and is daily increasing.<sup>9</sup>

Happy in these prospects and sustained by the love of God, the two apostles, instead of suffering themselves to be discouraged by the difficulties with which they were beset on all sides, redoubled their energies and their efforts in the cause of Christ. It was in this spirit that Father Fenwick wrote to his old friend, Rev. John Augustin Hill, O.P., then a student in Rome, but afterwards one of Ohio's most noted missionaries and pulpit orators:

. . . I am settled, with a confrère, Father Dominic Young, in Ohio (near Somerset, Perry County), where we have a splendid prospect of establishing our Holy Order. For we are the only ecclesiastics in the state, which has about three thousand Catholics scattered, like so many stray sheep, over an extent of territory of from seven hundred to eight hundred miles. Such is the theater of our mission. So you see: "*Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci. Rogate ergo . . .*" [The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth laborers into His harvest]. Our flock is composed principally of German and Irish Catholics. We are in great need of a German priest, for the greater number [of the former] are genuinely German, having emigrated within the past few years. But we want only truly apostolic men—men willing to bear the burdens of the heat and the cold, of fatigue and thirst, and content to traverse mountains and valleys in search of these lost sheep. "*Qui non quaerunt quae sua sunt, sed quae Jesu Christi*" [Those who seek not the

<sup>9</sup> Letter of Rev. N. D. Young to his father as in note 7.



SAINT JOSEPH'S, THE MOTHER CHURCH AND CONVENT OF OHIO



things that are their own, but the things that are Jesus Christ's]. . . . I hope you will strive to recruit and to bring as many *suitable laborers* as you can to our assistance in the Lord's vineyard.<sup>10</sup>

The apostolic man then proceeds to tell his friend how glad he is that he (Hill) is enjoying the blessing of receiving his ecclesiastical education in the Capital of Christendom, and so near the Order's General; what will be expected of him when he comes to America; the prospects of having a Dominican bishop in Ohio, as Doctor Flaget, the ordinary of Kentucky, has proposed Father Wilson, the provincial, for an episcopal see that is to be erected at Cincinnati; and the need of the fathers for breviaries, missals, vestments and church supplies. He urges Hill to procure as many necessities for religion as he can for his American brethren. Returning to the subject of the missions in Ohio, he writes again:

The church and house where we [that is, he and Father Young] live, are dedicated to Saint Joseph. Here we have a goodly estate—a farm of three hundred and twenty acres. We have another church or chapel, called Saint Mary's, twenty miles distant from these [that is, at Lancaster]; and a third at Cincinnati, one hundred and fifty miles away, which is under the patronage of Saint Patrick. But we have not enough vestments, chalices and furnishings for one place. At Saint Joseph's, we barely manage to make out with one chalice and a few old vestments belonging to Saint Rose's. These three churches have been erected within the last fifteen months.<sup>11</sup> Since coming to this state, we could have built four or five more chapels in different places, if we had had the means of constructing them.

<sup>10</sup> Fenwick, Georgetown, D. C., to Rev. John A. Hill, Rome, June 1, 1820 (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. IV, Nos. 138 and 151). In default of the original, we have again been obliged to use Italian and French translations.

<sup>11</sup> Likely 15 is here a clerical error for 18 or 19.



We are offered lands and lots in cities for this purpose; but such is the scarcity of money, the indifference of the times, and the want of charity in this regard, that we are not able to collect the funds necessary to build. In a word, we are totally without pecuniary resources, and have to depend solely on Divine Providence and the liberality of certain ones who have, up to the present, aided us in every way. . . .

A few months previous to this, March 15, 1820, Father Fenwick had written to Rev. S. T. Badin, in France, along the same lines. In this letter also the missionary says that he and his confrère have built three churches; but that they have hardly sufficient vestments, etc., for one. He would, therefore, be grateful for any such things, paintings, books, especially such as relate to the Order, and whatever might help to advance the cause of religion. He would be glad if his needs were called to the attention of his uncle, Joseph Fenwick, living in France.<sup>12</sup>

Imbued with the spirit of their Order and true to its best traditions, the two missionaries strove not merely to keep alive the spark of faith in their widely scattered missions, but to make their people good practical Catholics, or even lead them to perfection. So, too, did they leave nothing undone to bring others into the fold, and to build up Catholic centers by inducing those of their religious convictions in the east, who were desirous of moving to the west, to come to Ohio and settle in the same localities. In all these endeavors they were eminently successful.

A fruitful source of conversions by the friars was the custom of preaching on all occasions and in any place they could obtain permission or a hearing.

<sup>12</sup> *Origine et Progrès de la Mission du Kentucky*, p. 15.

Schools, court-houses, public squares of towns and at times even sectarian churches were used for this purpose. Another means of this apostolic work was the practice, when they met on their journeys, of holding public discussions, one advancing the objections then in vogue against the Church and her doctrines, the other answering them. Still a third method of which they availed themselves with splendid results, was the distribution of leaflets explanatory of Catholic teaching, and doubtless printed on the little pioneer press then in existence at Saint Rose's, in Kentucky. These little tracts were scattered broadcast. Controversies with non-Catholics were not infrequent. But the fathers generally sought to avoid such intellectual bouts; for it was felt that they tended to deepen prejudice, and were often an occasion of further misunderstanding, if not of ill-will, rather than of any real and lasting good.<sup>13</sup>

More than one of the old parishes in Ohio owe their origin largely to the efforts of the missionaries to bring Catholics to the state, and to purchase their homes in the same locality. Among such early immigrants were many from the two friars' own native Maryland. Likely, indeed, the following circular addressed by a committee of Catholics in Cincinnati to Archbishop Maréchal of Baltimore, and bearing the date of September 25, 1820, and others of its kind were written under the inspiration of Fathers Fenwick and Young. In the quaint language of the day, which we leave untouched, the document reads:

<sup>13</sup> These were topics on which Father Young loved to dwell in his old days. Spalding tells us (*Life of Flaget*, p. 204) that the ordinary of Bardstown ascribed the success of the two missionaries, "in great measure, to the circumstance that 'they preached little, but prayed the more.'" The full truth is that they both prayed and preached much.

We, the Roman Catholic committee of this city, beg leave to inform you, that about thirty miles from hence, on the East branch of the little Miami River, there have several families of the Catholic faith established themselves on a body of fertile lands, purchased from William Lyttle, Esq., who, in order to encourage settlers of our faith, has with that liberality for which he stands distinguished, granted a considerable tract of land for the use and benefit of a Roman Catholic church to be established there, in addition to which several of the settlers have contributed portions of land contiguous to the same, so as to form a respectable fund for the above purpose.

It having hitherto been [a] matter of deep regret and bitter disappointment to many of our countrymen, that on settling in the western wilds of this country, they have been deprived of the comforts and benefits arising from the exercise of our holy religion, we consider it of prime importance to give information to such persons as are inclined to emigrate hither, that on the extensive tracts of land, of first rate quality now on sale by Mr. Lyttle, all of which are situated on the waters of the East branch of the little Miami river, and are either intersected by, or contiguous to, the state road from hence to Chillicothe, they may have the opportunity of augmenting the number of Roman Catholic settlers under well founded hopes, that a regular and permanent establishment will speedily be made, of a church and pastor, so much to be desired by every Christian.

It may be further necessary to state that Mr. Lytle is determined to give encouragement to Roman Catholics and that he appears to us disposed to give them most liberal encouragement (to purchasers of our communion) as well on his lands above alluded to, as on his other property. And also that we have lately succeeded in the establishment of a respectable Roman Catholic church in this town, which unhappily had been so long deprived of that important benefit. Our object, therefore, in this and similar addresses is to inform emigrants of these circumstances, in order that they may not by religious considerations be deterred from endeavoring to better their fortunes by coming to the western country—either by settling on the above lands as agriculturists, or in this town as mechanics or men of business.

[Signed] P. Reilly, John White, William Boyle, James W. Byrne, Michael Scott, Edward Lynch, John Sherlock, James Gorman, Thomas Duran [? Dugan], P. Gazelles, Michael Moran.<sup>14</sup>

Thus the friars toiled on to enlarge the kingdom of Christ—to increase the joy and to renew the face of the earth. They lived rather on the things of heaven than on the things of earth. Often they were but half clothed and almost bare of foot. Where there was no church, mass was offered up in private houses—often, when the weather permitted, on an improvised altar under the shelter of a tree, or in other protected spots. This sacred function, together with confessions, sermons, instructions, and catechising consumed their days—not infrequently much of their nights.

How the missionaries had indeed to multiply themselves to meet all the calls on their ministry, may be judged from the fact that in 1819 Father Fenwick reported to his bishop that eight priests would scarcely suffice for the mission. Bishop Flaget was rejoiced at the success with which God crowned the zeal and self-sacrifice of the two Dominicans. The saintly prelate himself had visited Cincinnati in June, that year, and was thus an eye-witness of what they were accomplishing in that portion of his diocese. Doubtless it was then that he determined to petition the Holy Father to erect that promising pioneer town into an episcopal see, and to appoint Father Wilson its first ordinary, that the apostolic friars might have one of their own Order as their guide and superior.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Baltimore Archives, Case 22, B 1.

<sup>15</sup> SPALDING, *Life of Bishop Flaget*, pp. 183, 201–204. This learned author tells us that his statistics on the Church in Ohio “are derived from Father Fenwick’s correspondence with Bishop Flaget.” Unfortunately, this correspondence cannot now be found.



Father Young, in his old age, was wont innocently to boast that, in the performance of his priestly duties, he had ridden horseback a distance that would encircle the world several times. The same might be said of Ohio's first bishop. But perhaps neither ever did more strenuous riding than at this period of their lives. Never did they have to work harder. Perhaps, never did their labors bear more abundant fruit. It was their busy lives and their poverty, rather than the indifference of the people, that prevented them from erecting more churches to the honor of God.

Such was the life of the subject of our narrative during the first fourteen years of his apostolate in Ohio. Priests, indeed, had passed over the territory embraced in the limits of that state before his entrance there—but only in a manner that was transient and desultory. Their labors had no continuity of succession. To Fenwick it was given that his work should have permanency, making him at once the Father of Catholicity in Ohio and its Apostle.

Great priests, great and holy missionaries, labored to lay the foundations of the marvellous structure of the Catholic Church in the Mississippi Valley, east and west. Fenwick was the peer of the greatest and the best of them—their peer in virtue, in glory, in ceaseless energy, in work, in achievement. No list of those whom we honor as the Fathers of the faith in that portion of the United States, could be considered complete without his name. He shines as one of the brightest stars in the luminous constellation.

Alone he had turned the ploughshare and tilled the soil for nearly ten years. He was the pathfinder; the precursor. Unaffrighted, because trusting solely in the

Almighty God, he faltered not in his toils—sank not under their weight. In all his perigrinations, and in spite of the difficulties that beset his path at every step, no word of complaint escaped his lips. At last his priestly loneliness was broken by the arrival of Rev. N. D. Young. And now, for four years more, we have the unique spectacle of uncle and nephew not only vying with each other in zeal and piety, but acting as each other's confessor and spiritual director.

Father Fenwick's zeal was indeed extraordinary. It led him to do all for God—nothing for himself. With him the welfare of the Church and the salvation of souls were a burning passion. That he was a saint is the testimony of all who had known him—the uninterrupted ripple of the stream of tradition wherever the memory of him still survives: that is, through all Ohio, and in many parts of Kentucky. Immaculate of life, scrupulous of duty, tender of piety, in his every attitude a man of God and an ambassador of Christ, he sought nothing so much as to enkindle in the bosoms of his fellowmen that fire of divine love which burned so brightly within his own.

Had he died a simple priest—he aspired to no higher dignity—at the time of which we speak in this chapter, he would still deserve an honorable place in the American Catholic hall of fame. Yet, still greater glory and deeds of further good were in store for him. But of these subsequent pages will tell.

## CHAPTER XIII

### APPOINTED BISHOP

FAR different is Ohio's present magnificent archiepiscopal city of Cincinnati from the little pioneer town it was when it first fell into the life of our subject. Its earliest white settlers arrived late in 1788, and to the backwoods village which they began at once, they gave the name of Losantiville. The following year the place was selected for the location of Fort Washington, erected as a central post for the soldiers engaged in the Indian wars of the west. In 1790, Gen. Arthur St. Clair, then governor of the Northwest Territory, arrived at the settlement to organize Hamilton County. St. Clair was a member of the old Revolutionary War Society of Cincinnati, so called after Cincinnatus, the Roman general, and composed of former revolutionary soldiers or their male descendants according to primogeniture. At his request, the name of the incipient town was changed to that of Cincinnati in honor of this society.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of its great natural beauty and advantageous location, the spot on which the city now stands, appears to have had but little attraction for the earliest pioneer home-seekers on their voyage down the Ohio. One reason for this was possibly because the high hills skirting the north led them to fancy that the soil in those parts was poor and unproductive. Another, and still stronger, deterrent to settlement there was danger from

<sup>1</sup> HOWE, *Historical Collections of Ohio*, II, 25 ff.; FORD, *History of Cincinnati, Ohio*, pp. 29 ff.; GREVE, *Centennial History of Cincinnati*, I, 162 ff.

the Indians who infested the region. It lay on the path followed by the red man of the north in his incursions against the white settler at the south.

But when this danger was passed, the growth of the little town strung along the northern bank of the Ohio became more rapid; and no keen eye was required to foresee that it was soon to play an important part in the western civilization. In 1795, it had a population of five hundred. Five years later, its inhabitants numbered seven hundred and fifty. In December, 1801, the territorial legislature passed a bill transferring the seat of government from Chillicothe to Cincinnati. A month later, this bill was followed by another by which the town of Cincinnati was incorporated. Although the early lawmakers held but few legislative sessions there, the above enactment making Cincinnati the capital of the territory shows the light in which they regarded the growing town. It also served to attract public attention, and thus possibly led not a few to make their homes in the future episcopal seat. In 1810, Cincinnati's population had increased to 2,540. By 1820, it had grown to nearly 10,000. But in the meantime (1819), the state legislature had granted the municipality the charter of a city.<sup>2</sup>

Among the earliest settlers of Cincinnati are found names significant of the Catholic faith. But it cannot now be ascertained whether those who bore them professed its creed. If they did, the greater number of them were little credit to their religion. Perhaps its obligations sat lightly on the shoulders of all.

It was in 1805 that the first Catholic of whom there is

<sup>2</sup> HOWE, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-32; BURNET, *Notes on the Early Settlement of the Northwest Territory*, p. 300.



any definite record, arrived in the town. This was Michael Scott, a native of Baltimore but of Irish ancestry. Not even Jacob Dittoe was more staunchly true to his faith than this early citizen of Cincinnati. In spite of his untoward surroundings, he never wavered in his religion or, as far as lay in his power, failed in its obligations. On one occasion, we are told, he travelled with all his family from Cincinnati to Lexington, Kentucky, a distance of some seventy-five miles, that they might hear mass and receive the sacraments on Easter Sunday. We may imagine the good man's bitter disappointment at finding, on his arrival at Lexington, that the pastor was at a distant mission, and that the length of his absence was uncertain. Scott's faith, however, was unshaken; his trust in God not lessened.

Model Catholic that he was, Michael Scott did not neglect to instruct his children in their faith, to bring them up in fear and love of God, and to make them realize the blessing of the true religion. He felt that God would surely send them a priest in His own good time, and appears to have sought to inspire his Catholic fellow-townsmen with the same conviction. He lived to see his heart rejoiced at the residence of a bishop in his adopted town.<sup>3</sup>

It is not now possible to learn the precise number or the identity of the early Catholics of Cincinnati. They were few. Besides Michael Scott, the names of John Sherlock, Patrick Reilly, James Gorman, John M. Mahon, John White, P. Walsh, Patrick Geoghegan,

<sup>3</sup> *Catholic Telegraph*, July 20, 1833; *Souvenir Album of Catholic Churches of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Ohio*, pp. 9-10; *United States Catholic Magazine*, VI, 27; McCANN, *The History of Mother Seton's Daughters*, I, 157.

Edward Lynch, Robert Ward, Thomas Dugan, P. Gazelles, Michael Moran, Jacob Fowble, William Boyle, James W. Byrne, Simon Oehler, Joseph Hechinger, J. Zoller, Christian Dannheimer, and their families are on record, and deserve to be perpetuated. Not all these, however, had taken up their homes in the struggling western town until after it had become one of the centers of Father Fenwick's apostolic ministrations.<sup>4</sup>

Strange to say, none of the early missionary priests halted at Cincinnati on their journeys between Maryland and Kentucky. Nor did Bishop Flaget as is evident from his diary closely followed by Spalding in the life of that prelate, visit this portion of his diocese until May, 1818.<sup>5</sup> By this process of elimination it becomes positively certain that Father Fenwick was the first Catholic clergyman to enter that city, to administer to its people, and to offer up the holy sacrifice within its corporate limits.

The exact date when he began his visits cannot now be ascertained with absolute certainty. But in the issues of the *Liberty Hall and Cincinnati Gazette* for December 11, 18 and 25, 1811, we find a notice urging Catholics to organize a congregation in the town, and calling a meeting for that purpose in the house of Jacob Fowble. Nothing definite seems to have resulted from the attempt. Likely the Dominican missionary had stopped at Cincinnati on his tour through Ohio earlier in that year, and pressed the few faithful to bestir themselves for the good of their souls. The appeal, because indicative of the strong religious prejudices of the day and showing the odds against which the early Catholics

<sup>4</sup> *Album of Catholic Churches in Cincinnati*, pp. 10-11; *The Catholic Columbian*, December 21, 1907; *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, III, 773.

<sup>5</sup> SPALDING, *Life of Bishop Flaget*, p. 183.

had to contend, deserves insertion in the life of Ohio's apostle.

#### CATHOLICK MEETING.

As the Constitution of the United States allows liberty of conscience to all men, and the propagation of religious worship, it is earnestly requested by a number of ROMAN CATHOLICKS of Cincinnati, and its vicinity, that a meeting be held on the 25th of December next, at the house of Jacob Fowble, at 12 o'clock, A.M.; when it is hoped all those in favor of establishing a congregation, and giving encouragement, will attend and give in their names, and at the same time appoint a committee of arrangements.

Tradition tells us—and doubtless it is true—that the first mass said in Cincinnati was offered up by Father Fenwick on an improvised altar in the house of Michael Scott, which stood on the west side of what is now Walnut Street, about midway between Third and Fourth. The year 1811 is given as the date of the event. One may fancy the joy and gratitude of Scott and his fellow-Catholics on being able at last to assist at the oblation of the holy of holies, and to partake once more of the sacraments of the Church. That the zealous friar was in the pioneer town in 1815 Bishop Flaget's diary leaves no doubt. Tradition has it again that he visited the handful of faithful semiannually.<sup>6</sup>

Martin Scott continued to bestow the hospitality of his humble home on Fathers Fenwick and Young until 1822. Here was mass said, and the people came to hear the word of God and receive the bread of life until 1819. Indeed, this house deserves to be called the first Cath-

<sup>6</sup> *The Catholic Columbian*, December 21, 1907; SHEA, *History of the Catholic Church in the United States*, III, 337; McCANN, *op. cit.*, I, 157, and *Archbishop Purcell and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati*, p. 11; SPALDING, *Life of Bishop Flaget*, p. 203.

olic church of Cincinnati. Father Fenwick was anxious to build a temple of prayer in the town; but two difficulties stood in the way. One was the poverty of his little flock; the other the narrow intolerance of the time which seems to have made it wiser to erect the church beyond the municipal boundaries. Archbishop Purcell, referring to the early anti-Catholic bias and the struggles of the faithful in his episcopal city, says:

When they sought to procure a lot whereon to raise a little church, they met with contumely and reproach. They were told to go beyond the corporation line, to seek the brickyards; there they might find a place sufficiently good for them. The followers of a meek and lowly Saviour, they bore all with patience and resignation. They went beyond the limits of the city, rented the small square . . . on Vine Street, raised a small frame building, in which they devoutly assembled to adore the God of their fathers.<sup>7</sup>

Failing in his project of a church in the town itself, the zealous missionary turned his efforts to the erection of one on its outskirts. No doubt the following notice which appeared in the *Western Spy*, September 5,

<sup>7</sup> *The Catholic Telegraph*, April 3, 1845.—Bishop Purcell was likely led into the erroneous supposition that the ground was only rented by the date of the deed, 1821. An old and persistent tradition tells us that, in the early days, there was a city ordinance prohibiting the erection of a Catholic church within the municipal limits of Cincinnati. Until a short time ago, we thought such an ordinance a fact admitted by all. A thorough search of the city ordinances, however, failed to reveal either the enactment or the revocation of such an odious statute, although the records seem to be complete. This, together with the absence of any such statement in the contemporary literature in which one would naturally expect to find it, leads us to suspect that this tradition had its origin in the words of Doctor Purcell just quoted, and to believe that it is without any solid foundation in fact. That there was a strong anti-Catholic bias in the city is certain: it might have been such as to make it prudent to build the church beyond the municipal limits. The peace-loving Fenwick would readily cede this much to prejudices which he felt he could overcome later. But for a fuller discussion of this matter see a letter by the author in *The Catholic Historical Review*, V, 428 ff.



1817, was inserted either by Father Fenwick himself, or by one who acted under his direction. It reads:

#### A CATHOLICK CHURCH

The Catholicks of the town and the vicinity of Cincinnati, and those of the county of Hamilton, are requested to attend a meeting to be held at the house of Mr. Michael Scott on Walnut Street, a few doors below the Seminary, on Sunday, October 12th, for the laudable purpose of consulting on the best method of erecting and establishing a Catholick church in the vicinity of Cincinnati: they will likewise please to take notice that great encouragement is already held out to them.—“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews, XII, 2).<sup>8</sup>

The response to this appeal reveals a spirit of coldness or timidity on the part of some; for we are told that only “nine men, seven women and four children” came to the meeting.<sup>9</sup> Most likely the saintly friar, as a further means of putting courage into the hearts of the few Catholics, or of arousing the remiss to a sense of their duty, now decided to urge Bishop Flaget to pass through Cincinnati on the journey which he contemplated making to Michigan and Canada. Accordingly, on May 19, 1818, the city had its first episcopal visit. The bishop remained only two days; but in that short time arrangements were made for the purchase of a lot in a new suburb known as the Northern Liberties.<sup>10</sup>

Father Fenwick seems now to have left his nephew, Rev. N. D. Young, to devise ways and means for building the church and to superintend its construction, while he busied himself with the missions to the north

<sup>8</sup> This quotation is taken from the King James Version.

<sup>9</sup> *Album of Catholic Churches*, as above, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> SPALDING, *Life of Bishop Flaget*, p. 183.

and east. The poverty of the Catholics in the town, together with the refusal of non-Catholics to aid the enterprise, made it necessary to seek assistance elsewhere. Accordingly, the committee appointed to solicit funds, composed of Messrs. Scott, Mahon, White and Walsh, addressed the following letter to John Carrere, a merchant of Baltimore.

CINCINNATI, November 23rd, 1818.

*Sir:*—Permit us to address you on a subject which we deem very important. We are authorized in behalf of ourselves and the Roman Catholics of this town, that, considering ourselves like the lost sheep of the house of Israel, forlorn and forsaken, destitute of the means of exercising the duties of our holy religion, without guide, church or pastor, while we behold all other members of the community enjoying these benefits; we are compelled, from the paucity of our numbers, and the consequent want of pecuniary resources, to call upon our brethren throughout the Union for their assistance towards the erection of a Catholic church. For the speedy accomplishment of so desirable an object, we entertain a confident hope of your hearty co-operation.

Relying on your zeal and promptitude, we shall shortly expect to be favored with your reply to Mr. P. Reilly, of the firm of Perrys & Reilly, Brewers, Cincinnati.

We are, Sir, respectfully your obedient servants,

MICHAEL SCOTT, *Prest.*,  
JOHN M. MAHON,  
JOHN WHITE,  
P. WALSH, *Secretary*,  
Committee.<sup>11</sup>

How generous was the reply to this appeal we do not know. But subscriptions at home, together with assistance obtained from other places, soon made it possible to begin preparations for the erection of a house of worship. Earlier in the same year (1818), James Findlay

<sup>11</sup> *Album of Catholic Churches*, as above, pp. 11-12.

had laid out into lots a section of land just outside the city boundary, to which he gave the name of Northern Liberties, and advertised it for sale. A splendid location for the proposed church had been secured from Findlay on the corner of the present Vine and Liberty streets. And on February 5, 1819, the legislature of Ohio passed an enactment regulating the incorporation of religious societies. Accordingly, the committee at once formed a corporation in conformity therewith, to which they gave the name of Christ Church Congregation. Patrick Walsh, John Sherlock, Thomas Dugan, Edward Lynch and Michael Scott were elected trustees. On February 27, 1819, through the medium of the *Western Spy*, a call was issued to the Catholics of Cincinnati and Hamilton County for a general meeting at the house of John White, Sunday, March 7, "on business of importance." The pressing business was doubtless to urge the people to be more generous in their subscriptions and more prompt in their payments. How long the church was in process of being built we have not been able to learn. But we are told that the plans were drawn by Michael Scott. The timber was purchased from William Reilly, near Alexandria, Kentucky. Reilly also delivered the lumber in the Northern Liberties and worked on the plain building until near its completion.<sup>12</sup>

Appeals appeared in the *Western Spy* on March 13, 20 and 27, urging all contributors to pay as much of their subscriptions as they possibly could, "as the committee will thereby be enabled to have the Church ready

<sup>12</sup> *Liberty Hall and Cincinnati Gazette*, June 9, 1818; Deed Book V, No. 1, pp. 525-26 (Recorder's Office, Cincinnati); *Laws of Ohio*, XVIII, 6-8 (second pagination); *Album of Catholic Churches*, as above, pp. 14-15.—As the deed to the land on which the church stood, was not secured until 1821, some have erroneously concluded that it was not built until that date.

for Divine Service by next Easter Sunday." Thus, it would seem, true is the old tradition which tells us that the first mass was said in Cincinnati's proto-Catholic church on Easter Sunday, 1819. This was April 11, and Father Young seems to have been the celebrant. On June 21, 1819, Bishop Flaget, returning from Michigan, stopped in Cincinnati again. The prelate was agreeably surprised to find the sacred edifice not merely under roof, but even in use. His joy was the greater because the church stood on a plot of ground some one hundred and twenty feet square, and had a debt of only about one hundred dollars.<sup>13</sup> Although the congregation had been incorporated under the title of Christ Church, the house of prayer itself was dedicated to the service of God under the patronage of Saint Patrick. The venerated spot on which it stood is the location of the present fine church and monastery of Saint Francis of Assisi, under the care of the Friars Minor.

Such, in brief outline, is the early Catholic history of Ohio's metropolitan city, over which Father Fenwick was soon to be appointed its first bishop, as he had been the first to administer to its Catholic population. Humble and unpretentious in its beginnings, the history of early Catholicity in Cincinnati is, however, full of romantic interest. The new see was soon to play an important part in the Church of America. We may all learn a wholesome lesson both from the zeal, piety and self-sacrifice of the city's first ordinary, and from the uncomplaining spirit with which the early missionaries toiled on amidst hardships, poverty and privations.

<sup>13</sup> SPALDING, *Life of Bishop Flaget*, p. 201.—It has been generally supposed that this church was called Christ Church. But Fenwick's letter reproduced in the preceding chapter proves conclusively that it was Saint Patrick's.



It has been seen that the needs of the Church in Ohio, as well as the labors of the Friar Preacher in the cause of souls there, had attracted the attention of Doctor Flaget; that the zealous prelate realized the necessity of having an episcopal see erected in Cincinnati; and that he intended to ask Pius VII to appoint the provincial of the Dominicans, Father Samuel T. Wilson, to this responsible position. But as a search of the archives of the Propaganda failed to reveal any document containing such a proposal, it would seem that the bishop changed his mind on the question of the state's first prelate, and that the learned friar's name was never sent to Rome in that connection.

One reason for this change was probably that Bishop Flaget was unwilling to lose a clergyman whom he considered the shining light of his diocese; another was that Wilson, besides being advanced in age, was preeminently a scholar, accustomed for years to study and the direction of students, rather than to the active life of a pioneer missionary. The prelate, therefore, began to look for others from whom to choose Ohio's first spiritual head. The two who appealed to him especially, were Fathers Demetrius A. Gallitzin and Edward D. Fenwick. Accordingly, he proposed them to Archbishop Maréchal and the Holy See as worthy to wear the miter of Cincinnati. Gallitzin's name was selected largely because of his knowledge of German, the language spoken by many of the Catholics in the north; Fenwick's because of his known zeal and effective missionary labors in that part of the country. Maréchal, omitting the name of Gallitzin, at first recommended Bishop David and Father Fenwick. Of the latter the metropolitan wrote, that he was certainly a learned and prudent man, as well as a priest noted for

his piety and zeal; and that he had accomplished great good for that part of the Lord's vineyard. Two months later, when he had studied the matter more closely, the archbishop wrote again, withdrawing the name of David and recommending only that of Fenwick, whom he now declared to be the fittest of the candidates mentioned to direct the destinies of the proposed new diocese.<sup>14</sup>

Without other ambition than to serve God, unsuspecting of the designs of the hierarchy in his regard, and unaware of the steps that were being taken for the welfare of the Church in Ohio, the missionary continued his heroic efforts to foster its growth and to save souls. More than once he solicited help from his brethren in Kentucky. But Bishop Flaget's opposition to the departure of priests from that portion of his diocese was unyielding. Great, too, were the needs of the home convent, the college of Saint Thomas attached thereto, the congregation of Saint Rose and the distant missions. Thus Fenwick and Young were obliged to labor on single-handed. Early in the fall of 1821, however, they were rejoiced at the prospect of early aid by the arrival from Europe of four recruits for the province. The new-comers were Rev. John Augustine Hill, Brothers John Thomas Hynes and John Baptist Vincent De Raymaecker, and Daniel Joseph O'Leary. Hynes and De Raymaecker were ready for ordination, though the latter had not yet completed his novitiate. O'Leary had nearly finished his studies at Rome, and was to enter the Order in America. All three had been procured by Father Hill, at the instigation of Fathers

<sup>14</sup> Bishop Flaget, Bardstown, to the prefect of the Propaganda, November 5, 1820 (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. IV, No. 139); Archbishop Maréchal to same, April 4 and June 28, 1820 (Propaganda Archives, respectively America Centrale, Vol. IV, No. 148, and Acta of 1821, folio 272a).

Fenwick and Wilson, for the new American province of Friars Preacher.

Prior to this, Pius VII, by the Bull *Inter Multiplices* of June 19, 1821, had erected Cincinnati into an episcopal see and appointed Father Fenwick its bishop. The document was sent to the Right Rev. William Poynter, London, England, that he might forward it to America. It reached Bishop Flaget, October 13, 1821, shortly after the arrival of Father Hill and his little band of students.<sup>15</sup>

While the news brought joy to the Catholics of Ohio, it filled the soul of the state's apostle with consternation. His humility was alarmed, and with all his heart he said: "*Nolo episcopari.*" He at once buried himself in the backwoods missions, hoping thus to escape the dreaded dignity. Nor was it without great difficulty, a model of obedience though he was, that his bishop and provincial calmed his conscience and prevailed over his reluctance to accept the episcopal office.<sup>16</sup>

The friar's lowly opinion of himself served only to raise him the higher in the esteem of others. While he fancied himself both unworthy of the episcopal honor and incapable of meeting its obligations, all others felt that he was the man best suited for the position. The truly humble, however, are not blindly obstinate in their

<sup>15</sup> Flaget to the prefect of the propaganda, January 4, 1822 (photostat copy); SPALDING, *Life of Bishop Flaget*, p. 217. Flaget's letter says that the bulls were received in December. But we have accepted the date given by Spalding, as he follows Flaget's diary, and seems to be more reliable in such matters.

<sup>16</sup> Fenwick, Kentucky, to Archbishop Maréchal, Baltimore, February 9, 1823 (Baltimore Archives, Case 16, W 1); Rev. John A. Hill, Kentucky, to Father Benedict Olivieri, Rome, January 27, 1822 (Propaganda Archives, Scrittura Originali, Vol. 929); Rev. John A. Hill, Kentucky, to a friend in Europe, November 21, 1821 (*The Catholic Miscellany*, London, I, 327-28); SPALDING, *Life of Bishop Flaget*, p. 217, and *Sketches of the Early Catholic Missions in Kentucky*, pp. 157-58.—In more than one letter to Rome Fenwick tells how obedience had obliged him to accept the miter.

judgment. When they bow, as did Father Fenwick, to the voice of Christ speaking through their superiors, they find a source of strength and courage in the consciousness of their obedience that enables them bravely to bear the burden imposed upon them, and faithfully to discharge the duties of their station.

Father Fenwick was raised to the episcopacy by Bishop Flaget on the octave of the Epiphany, Sunday, January 13, 1822. The consecration, the second function of the kind performed west of the Alleghany Mountains, took place at Saint Rose's, a church that the friar himself had erected. By papal dispensation two of his colleagues, Fathers Wilson and Hill, assisted at the ceremony which was carried out with all the pomp and splendor possible in the backwoods of Kentucky. Right Rev. John B. David, coadjutor of Bardstown, preached the sermon. Attracted in part perhaps by the novelty of the occasion, but especially by the love and esteem in which the well-known missionary was held, people came from far and near to see him enrolled in the Church's hierarchy.<sup>17</sup>

Father Fenwick was now a bishop. But possibly no Christian prelate was ever confronted with greater destitution than that which Cincinnati's first ordinary had to face. He had taken the vow of poverty, and he had practiced it with scrupulosity. He had not a farthing that he could call his own. The poor convent from which he had been taken, could help him but little. Fortunately, the people of Saint Rose's Parish, though themselves poor, agreed to take up a subscription in his

<sup>17</sup> Bishop Flaget's testimonial letter of Fenwick's consecration (Archives of Notre Dame University); Rev. J. A. Hill, Kentucky, to a friend in Europe, February 8, 1822 (*The London Catholic Miscellany*, I, 328-29); same to Father Olivieri, as in the preceding note; SPALDING, *Life of Bishop Flaget*, p. 218.



behalf. In the meantime, while the funds necessary to take him and his retinue to the episcopal city were being thus collected, the new prelate conferred holy orders on a number of his confrères in the same church in which he himself had been so lately consecrated.<sup>18</sup> Fathers Thomas H. Martin, John Hyacinth McGrady, J. T. Hynes and J. B. V. De Raymaecker, the last two of whom have already been mentioned, were raised to the priesthood.

Bishop Fenwick had made it a condition of accepting the miter that Father Wilson, the provincial, would go to Cincinnati in the capacity of vicar general. Accordingly, having obtained between four and five hundred dollars in paper money from the people of Kentucky, and got together whatever vestments, chalices or other articles his convent could spare, the saintly prelate started for his episcopal city, accompanied by this learned divine and Fathers Hill, Hynes and De Raymaecker. The journey which must have taken several days, was made in an old-fashioned cart, then an indispensable possession of our pioneer backwoodsmen, drawn by two horses in tandem fashion—all a gift of Saint Rose's to his lordship. The weather was rainy; the roads, lately cut through the forests, were rough and muddy. In places they consisted merely of trees felled and laid side by side over marshes and low places. More than once the conveyance, carrying both the episcopal suite and their baggage, broke down. The travellers,

<sup>18</sup> Fenwick, Cincinnati, May 20, and Bordeaux, August 8 and 11, 1823, to Rev. S. T. Badin, France (The London *Catholic Spectator*, I, 350-353); some notes, still in manuscript, on the Erection of the Diocese of Cincinnati by Rev. J. B. V. De Raymaecker, O.P. (Archives of the Dominicans, Louvain).—Father De Raymaecker evidently intended to write an article or something on the early diocese. As he was an eye-witness of what he relates, we largely follow his narrative through the rest of this chapter. The sources of other facts are referred to in the notes.

obliged to swim the Kentucky River which was swollen by the recent rains, were in great danger of losing their lives.

The evening before they reached their destination, the ecclesiastical caravan halted at a road-side hostel for supper. As it was Friday, the bishop instructed the lady of the house to prepare anything she pleased for their meal, except meat. Surprised at such instructions from travellers so way-worn, she suggested that perhaps they would like to have chicken. On being told that they would not take even this dish, she asked: "Are you of those people whom they call Jews, and who crucified our Saviour? Or are you Romans?" To which the holy prelate kindly replied: "No, my good lady, we are Christians. We are Catholics; but some people call us Roman Catholics, because the head of our Church resides at Rome." Another source of amazement to the pioneer innkeepers, especially to the younger ones, was the sign of the cross made by the travellers before and after eating.

The meal, considering the day and the times, was all that could be desired, and was enjoyed by the wayfarers. A bountiful piece of pie which all, except the bishop, thought was made of prunes, formed the last portion. The famished priests had begun to eat this dish with evident delight, when they noticed that his lordship had set his plate aside, and was amused at the others. Asked why he had done so, he replied with a smile: "It is mince. But continue. I have every reason for dispensing you."

It was on Saturday evening, apparently March 23, that the travellers, after many difficulties, arrived at Cincinnati. Putting their horses and cart in the stable of the hotel, they went to Michael Scott's for supper; but

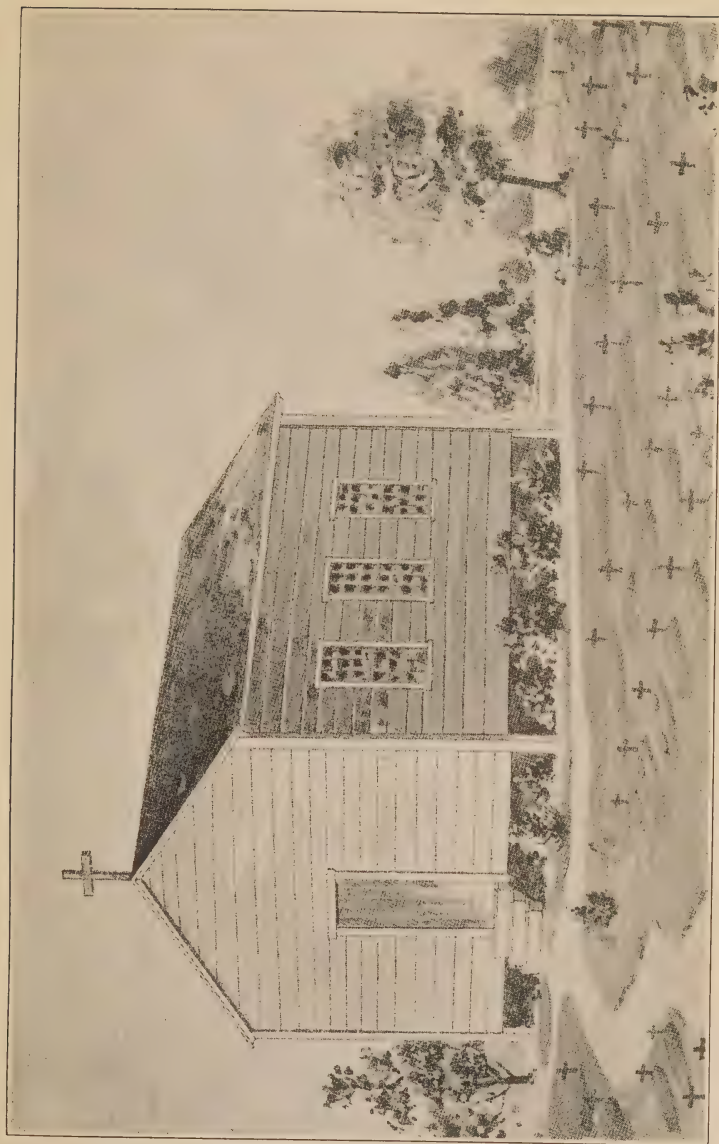
the unexpected arrival of so many made it necessary to send out for their first meal in the episcopal city. As Scott's home was not large enough to accommodate his guests together with his own family, an empty house within the municipal limits was rented for Saturday night and Sunday.<sup>19</sup> The building, it would seem, had but one room. Fortunately it was a spacious chamber. Here the little band of exhausted ecclesiastics slept soundly on pallets spread on the floor.

On the morrow, no doubt, mass was said in this room and the Scott home, as well as in the little suburban church of which we have spoken. It was at this last place, of course, that the papal bull erecting the new see of Cincinnati was read by Father Wilson, and that Bishop Fenwick was installed in his diocese with "humble ceremony and silent panegyric." He needed none other.

What remained of the paper money given the bishop by the people of Saint Rose's, Kentucky, after defraying the expenses of the journey to Cincinnati, was depreciated by half in Ohio.<sup>20</sup> Thus he found himself without means, and without even a temple of worship in his episcopal city. He was like the apostles in poverty no less than in zeal and humility. Happily, on the morning after his arrival, an Irish family living a mile or so from the town and that had probably come to the installation, tendered him and his companions lodgment until they could obtain a house of their own. The generous offer was gratefully accepted. The bishop, with

<sup>19</sup> Father Hill's letter of February 8, 1822 (*London Catholic Miscellany*, I, 328-29), in which he says that the bishop intended to start for Cincinnati on March 25, shows that the party arrived sooner than was expected. Hence, likely, the reason why nothing was prepared for the reception of the episcopal suite.

<sup>20</sup> Fenwick to Badin, as in note 18.



SAINT PATRICK'S, CINCINNATI'S FIRST CATHOLIC CHURCH, IN WHICH BISHOP FENWICK WAS INSTALLED





his clergy, now started for their temporary abode, travelling in the same conveyance in which they had come from Kentucky. A heavy sleet covered the ground, and the rough road ran along a steep hillside. The clumsy cart slid and upset, spilling the occupants. Fortunately all escaped without serious injury.

The bull of Fenwick's appointment to Cincinnati also placed Michigan and the Northwest Territory under his jurisdiction. For this reason, Rev. Gabriel Richard, pastor at Detroit, came to Kentucky for the consecration of his new superior. On the same occasion, in response to the prelate's appeal for help, Revs. Anthony Ganilh and Francis Vincent Badin, both belonging to the diocese of Bardstown, offered their services for the desolate Church of the north. Both offers were accepted, Bishop Flaget consenting. Badin was in deacon's orders. Two young men studying under Ganilh also enlisted in the holy cause. These recruits arrived in Cincinnati on March 28, after a journey of eight days. Here they were joined by Richard, and "were received by the bishop with open arms." On Holy Saturday, April 6, 1822, Badin was raised to the priesthood in the little frame church outside the city limits. It was the first priestly ordination in Ohio, as that of his elder brother, Rev. S. T. Badin, had been the first in the United States. No stretch of the imagination is needed to fancy that the event awakened keen interest in the pioneer town.<sup>21</sup>

A few days later, Father Richard, accompanied by the four recruits, started for the northwest, where they

<sup>21</sup> Rev. F. V. Badin, Michigan, to Rev. S. T. Badin, France, September 14, 1822 (Louisville Diocesan Archives); Rev. Anthony Ganilh to Bishop Flaget, April 22, 1822 (*ibid.*); Bishop Flaget, Bardstown, to Rev. S. T. Badin, France, April 10 and June 24, 1822 (The London *Catholic Miscellany*, I, 365 ff., and 11, 19 ff.).

were to labor on the missions. Doubtless it was intended that the two students (Badin calls them seminarians) should act as catechists, while they continued their preparation for the priesthood under Richard or Ganilh.<sup>22</sup> Likely, too, one of the newly ordained Dominicans was soon sent to Saint Joseph's that he might assist Father Young in central and eastern Ohio.

Impoverished though he was, the thoughtful prelate, not to inconvenience his people, now rented a small house on the corner of Ludlow and Lawrence streets. Here he and his priests slept in the garret that one of the rooms might be used for a chapel, and the other serve as a parlor in which to receive the people.<sup>23</sup> The spirit of intolerance, through contact with the missionaries, had now begun to wane. Bishop Fenwick, therefore, in spite of his poverty, determined to move the wooden chapel into the town that it might be within easier reach of the people. A lot for this purpose was secured on the western side of Sycamore Street between Sixth and Seventh—in the very heart of the city. The building, however, collapsed as it was being drawn along on rollers; and it became necessary to tear it apart, to haul the lumber to its destination on wagons, and to erect another house of worship.<sup>24</sup>

Foundations of brick were then laid for the new structure, apparently somewhat larger than the former. The work of reconstruction caused delay. In the meantime, divine services were held in the small rented house of

<sup>22</sup> Letter of F. V. Badin, as in the preceding note.

<sup>23</sup> Father De Raymaecker does not mention this house. Bishop Fenwick, however, speaks of it in at least three letters; and tradition still points out the site on which it stood. Some accounts of early Catholicity in Cincinnati insist on bringing it into the life of the prelate before his consecration. But this is evidently too early.

<sup>24</sup> *The Catholic Telegraph*, II, 86, and April 3, 1845.

which we have spoken—and probably also in the home of Martin Scott to accommodate the overflow from the growing congregation. When finished, the little frame cathedral is described as “very decent.” It was dedicated, late in November, or early in December, 1822, under the title of Saint Peter in honor of the prince of the apostles. The basement was divided into four or five rooms, into which the bishop now moved with his clergy. Such was Cincinnati’s first episcopal palace. It was without plaster and bare of all ornament. The ceiling was the floor of the church. Father De Raymaecker wittily assures us that its occupants did not need an alarm clock to stir them from their slumbers in the morning.<sup>25</sup>

Prior to this, an extra lot had been purchased alongside the ground secured for the first church, and was used as a graveyard. Now all the land owned in the Northern Liberties was devoted to this purpose, giving the Catholics of Cincinnati a “God’s acre” fronting one hundred and sixty feet on the present Vine Street, and extending one hundred and twenty feet to the west.<sup>26</sup>

The *milieu* in which the pious bishop lived and labored, and the society to which he had to accommodate himself, may be seen from the city directory of 1819. Speaking of the town’s population of some 10,000, the author says: “This mixed assemblage is composed of emigrants from almost every part of Christendom.

<sup>25</sup> Letter of Father Hill, Cincinnati, December 5, 1822 (London *Catholic Miscellany*, II, 141); Fenwick, Turin, to the prefect of the Propaganda, May 12, 1824 (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. VIII); Hill, Cincinnati, to Fenwick, London, August 23, 1824 (Archives of Saint Joseph’s Province).

<sup>26</sup> Deed Book No. 23, pp. 119–20 (Recorder’s Office, Cincinnati); *Album of Catholic Churches*, as above, p. 15.



The greater part of the population are from the Middle and Northern States. We have, however, many foreigners among us, and it is not uncommon to hear three or four different languages spoken in the street at the same time." The prelate's difficulties arising from this multiplicity of languages and racial characteristics were accentuated by the fact that the pioneer settlers were restless adventurers in pursuit of fortunes, and not always docile to the dictates of conscience or to the precepts of religion. One cannot but feel that his patience and zeal were often sorely tried.

The efforts for the good of religion in the episcopal city, of which we have spoken, did not lessen Bishop Fenwick's interest in the other souls entrusted to his charge, or in the arduous labors of his little band of missionaries in the rest of the diocese. Leaving Father Hill in charge of the improvements at Cincinnati, he and Father Wilson made a tour of Ohio that lasted several months. Often, indeed, he was absent from home to administer the sacrament of confirmation, or to gather "stray sheep" into the fold. In the summer and fall of 1822 he journeyed on to Michigan accompanied by Father Young. At Truceville, Ohio, the latter held a controversy with an infidel. At Monroe, Michigan, the prelate learned with sorrow that the people were not supporting Father Ganilh stationed there to replace Rev. Philip Janvier who had been loaned to Bishop Flaget, but had lately returned to the diocese of New Orleans. During this visitation, about three hundred persons were confirmed in the two parishes of Detroit. The bishop hoped to visit all the northern missions on this tour, but was prevented from doing so by the lateness of the season and the want of means to travel

farther.<sup>27</sup> What he saw, however, showed clearly the necessity of erecting an episcopal see at Detroit. The spiritual privations of the many Catholics, especially those of the Indians, scattered through the northwest country touched his paternal heart. It was perhaps on this occasion that the man of God conceived a strong desire of devoting himself to the life of a missionary among the red men.

A plan in which Bishop Fenwick placed great hopes for the good of religion in that part of the American Church entrusted to his charge was a Catholic college at Cincinnati. Indeed, this was one of the purposes for which Father Wilson accompanied him to the north. The new prelate had been one of the first to foresee the need of such institutions in the western country; and he had witnessed the blessings accruing from the colleges in Kentucky and Maryland. Accordingly, we find the following notice in one of Cincinnati's public prints just one week after his arrival there.

Communicated: We congratulate the Roman Catholics of this city and environs on the arrival of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Fenwick, lately consecrated Bishop of Cincinnati and the State of Ohio. This circumstance interests not only the Catholics but all the friends of literature and useful knowledge, as we understand that his intention is ultimately to open a school, aided by the members of his order long distinguished for their piety and learning.<sup>28</sup>

Kentucky already had three such colleges, wholly too many for its population. Bardstown's ordinary, anxious for the success of his two diocesan institutions,

<sup>27</sup> Fenwick, Kentucky, to Archbishop, Maréchal, Baltimore, February 9, 1823 (Baltimore Archives, Case 16, W 1); Eliza Ann Godfroye, Raisin River, Michigan, to Bishop Flaget (Louisville Archives); SHEA, *op. cit.*, III, 344; *The London Catholic Miscellany*, I, 475.

<sup>28</sup> *Liberty Hall and Cincinnati Gazette*, March 30, 1822. See also the *London Catholic Miscellany*, I, 475.

rather looked with disfavor upon that of the Dominicans as standing in their way. As a consequence, it was now determined to transfer the college of Saint Thomas attached to Saint Rose's to Cincinnati and to use the place merely as a convent and novitiate—perhaps eventually to abandon it altogether. With this in view, Fathers Stephen H. Montgomery, Thomas H. Martin and John H. McGrady were called to Ohio by their provincial. But Bishop Flaget, zealous almost to a fault for the good of his own diocese, not only strongly opposed this measure, but also wrote to Cardinal Consalvi, begging him to prevent its execution.

Strange to say, the cardinal, although he perhaps had no competency in the matter, and even without consulting or hearing the other side of the case, ordered Father Samuel T. Wilson to divide his little band of priests between the bishops of Ohio and Kentucky.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, it is not a little edifying to see the provincial of the Dominicans, for the sake of harmony, readily obey a command that likely did not bind in law, and that was fraught with evil consequences both to his Order and to the Church in Ohio. Indeed, as a result of this, Father Wilson was soon obliged to return to Kentucky. Father John A. Hill then became vicar general. However, the ill-advised ordinance of Cardinal Consalvi, preventing as it did a concentration of forces, not merely long stood in the way of a more rapid growth of the American Province of Friars Preacher,

<sup>29</sup> The prefect of the Propaganda to the superior of the Dominicans in Kentucky, July 27, 1822 (Archives of Saint Joseph's Convent, Somerset); Fenwick to Archbishop Maréchal, February 9, 1823 (Baltimore Archives, Case 16, W 1); same to the prefect of the Propaganda, April 16, 1823 (copy in Archives of Notre Dame University).—There are many letters showing Bishop Fenwick's bitter disappointment at this turn of things. Cardinal Consalvi's orders reached Kentucky in October, 1822, just when matters were assuming shape in Ohio.



but was the source of much annoyance to Bishop Fenwick, and greatly impeded the progress of religion in his diocese.

Although the people of Cincinnati, both Catholic and non-Catholic, had aided in the improvements of which we have spoken, Bishop Fenwick had been obliged to contract considerable debts. In the meantime, two wooden churches, besides those of Saint Joseph, Saint Mary (at Lancaster), and the cathedral, had been built, while four others were under way.<sup>30</sup> Some of these were also burdened with debt, and the holy prelate was without resources. New congregations were springing up through all the state, to at least twenty-two of which he had made an episcopal visitation. Ohio's population was now over 600,000. Catholics, among them many Germans and Swiss, were to be found in almost every county.<sup>31</sup> Cries of distress and spiritual hunger came from every direction. Michigan also joined in the chorus of appeal for assistance. Hard times had borne heavily on the western country for some years.

Thus overwhelmed with cares, burdened with debts,

<sup>30</sup> It is not now possible to determine all these six additional churches with positive certainty. One of the two already completed was surely Saint Barnabas', Morgan County, the fifth church in Ohio. The other was likely either Saint Paul's, near the present Dungannon, or Saint Luke's, near our modern Danville; but Saint Paul's appears to have been built before Saint Luke's. The four fanes under way were likely one of the last two mentioned, Holy Trinity, Somerset, Saint Dominic's, in Guernsey County, and either Saint John the Baptist's, Canton, or a little church in the McKenzie Settlement, southeastern Indiana. Shea tells us (*History of the Catholic Church*, III, 349), that the corner-stone of Holy Trinity was laid, May 26, 1822; but this event certainly took place at a later date. Prior to any of these churches, a brick warehouse had been fitted up in Zanesville and used as a temple of prayer. It was called Holy Trinity, and was really the fourth church in the state. But we are inclined to think that the bishop did not include it in his enumeration, for the reason that it was intended to use it only temporarily, and it was the property of John S. Dugan.

<sup>31</sup> Bishop Fenwick to Rev. S. T. Badin, as in note 18.



without resources, and largely deprived, through the action of Bishop Flaget and Cardinal Consalvi, of the ministerial and other help which he had expected from his Order, the distressed prelate knew not what to do. In the spring of 1823, Father Wilson, the Dominican provincial, sent Rev. J. H. McGrady to Ireland and Rev. J. T. Hynes to Continental Europe in search of assistance for his episcopal friend. But the dilemma was such that the bishop concluded that the safer plan would be to go himself to the head of the Church and seek relief from the difficulties in which he was immeshed. To Rome, therefore, he would journey in whatever way he could.

But as often happens with true men of God, the prelate's humility caused him to imagine that his troubles were in no small measure due to his own unworthiness and incapacity. Accordingly, his first act, on arriving in the Eternal City, would be to lay his miter at the feet of the common father of the faithful, that it might be taken up, as he fancied, by more worthy and capable hands. Failing in this, he would plead with all his soul for the aid and resources of which he stood so sadly in need.

## CHAPTER XIV

### VISIT TO ROME

RARELY do the records of history reveal a successor of the apostles so poverty-stricken, or in such great need of succor of every kind, as was the first ordinary of Cincinnati. One of the problems that troubled his mind at this time was how to obtain the means necessary for the journey to Rome, that he might plead his cause before the Vicar of Christ. But divine providence, which, as he confesses, had often come to the bishop's aid in trying circumstances, did not forsake him at this juncture. A Catholic layman, perhaps in gratitude for some spiritual favor he had received from the prelate, offered to lend him some three hundred dollars without interest.<sup>1</sup>

With this paltry sum of money—happy, indeed, that he had obtained even so much—but with great trust in God, the holy bishop started on his long journey. He left Cincinnati, May 30, 1823, on board *The Putnam*.<sup>2</sup> From Wheeling or Pittsburgh he travelled overland to Maryland, whither he went to consult Archbishop Maréchal on the object of his mission to Rome. While in that state, he no doubt took advantage of the opportunity to visit his nearest relations before leaving the

<sup>1</sup> Fenwick to Badin, Cincinnati, May 29, and Bordeaux, August 8 and 11, 1823 (*The Catholic Spectator*, London, I, 350 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> Fenwick to Badin, as in the preceding note; same, Cincinnati, to Rev. John McElroy, Frederick, Maryland, May 12, 1823 (Archives of the Maryland-New York Province of the Jesuit Fathers—McElroy Papers); same, "on board steamboat *Putnam*, near Wheeling," to Archbishop Maréchal, "May [evidently June] 3, 1823" (Baltimore Archives, Case 16, W 2).

country; for his piety and long absence from home had not caused to dry up in his bosom the spontaneous affections which God has implanted in our nature. From Baltimore he proceeded to New York, most likely to confer with Bishop Connolly also, whose long residence in the Eternal City made him conversant with the ways and methods of Rome and the papal court. Sailing from New York early in July, he arrived at Bordeaux on the fifth of August after a voyage of twenty-eight days.<sup>3</sup>

At Bordeaux, Bishop Fenwick had hoped to meet Rev. Stephen T. Badin, formerly a missionary in Kentucky, but then sojourning in France, by whom he expected to be aided in the business that had taken him abroad. It was, therefore, a keen disappointment to find that Father Badin was in Paris. The Abbé Rigagnon, however, an admirable young priest and vicar at one of the city's churches, took Father Badin's place, and showed the American prelate every kindness. There, as everywhere, Bishop Fenwick's open candor and unaffected piety won all hearts. The Most Rev. Charles Francis d'Aviau du Bois de Sanzai, archbishop of Bordeaux, the clergy of every rank and the city in general, we are told, treated him with the greatest deference. The venerable metropolitan, with whom he stopped, sought to have him prolong his stay. But the man of God was about his Father's business, and could be induced to tarry with his generous host only so long as was necessary to collect some assistance for his impoverished church, and the means necessary for his journey.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Fenwick to Badin, as in note 1.

<sup>4</sup> A rough draft of a letter of Fenwick to Bishop Dubourg, 1826 or 1827 (Archives of Notre Dame University); *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, II, 91-92.

A written permission to say mass, dated Marseilles, August 20, 1823, reveals not only the bishop's presence in this beautiful seaport of the Mediterranean on that date, but his scrupulous care both to perform this sacred function day by day and to comply with the laws of the Church.<sup>5</sup> At Leghorn he stopped again, probably to rest and to gather further aid. Here he stayed with the Dominican Fathers at their convent of Saint Catherine, whence he wrote to the cardinal prefect of the Propaganda.

It was on September 26, 1823, that our prelate reached the Eternal City. On the way his heart was torn by the intelligence that Pius VII, the holy Pontiff who had honored him with the miter, had passed to the reward of his long and faithful life. Thus Bishop Fenwick, on his arrival at Rome, found the Church in mourning; but two days later, the Catholic world was rejoiced by the election of Cardinal Annibale della Genga to the Chair of Peter, after a conclave that is noted for its length (nearly four weeks), and for having initiated the custom of electing the Sovereign Pontiffs in the Quirinal—a practice that continued until the iniquitous seizure of this papal palace by the Italian Government in 1870. The new Pope was crowned on October 5, 1823, taking the name of Leo the Twelfth.

The impression made at Rome by the pious bishop of Cincinnati may be judged from the fact that he was admitted to a special audience by Leo on October 6, the day after the coronation. The friar prelate was most graciously received by the new Pope; and his first words were an humble request to be allowed to resign his see,

<sup>5</sup> This permission is written on the certificate of the bishop's consecration (Archives of Notre Dame University).



that it might be entrusted to worthier and more capable hands. But the Holy Father, smiling, forbade him to speak further on such a topic. The condition, prospects and needs of the diocese, in regard to both spiritual and temporal matters, were then discussed. Leo promised generous help, and encouraged the American prelate to continue the work which God had commenced through his ministrations, assuring him that his efforts would be crowned with success.<sup>6</sup>

But all matters for the welfare of the new diocese could not be discussed or settled at one interview. Thus Bishop Fenwick was obliged to remain some three months at the Capital of Christendom. Much of this time he spent in consulting others, particularly the members of the Propaganda and the authorities of his own Order, in regard to his spiritual charge. During this time, we fancy, for he never failed to lodge at a house of his brethren when possible, he lived with the Irish Dominicans at San Clemente, one of the most historic churches of the Eternal City, and long the home of his former friend and protector, Father Richard L. Concanen. Nor was the missionary prelate a man who, now that he had the opportunity, would neglect the points of interest in Rome and its environs.

Immortal Rome, more than any other city of the world, bears witness at once to the past splendors of paganism and the triumphs of Christianity. Her ruins speak in mute eloquence of a proud power, a magnificence and a civilization that are gone to return no more. These, we may rest assured, claimed the bishop's keen attention during many of his leisure moments; for pious though he was and much given to thought on the things

<sup>6</sup> *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, II, 92.

of heaven, he had in him a delightful touch of the human that caused him to maintain an interest in the beautiful things of earth.

Yet there were other objects in the old papal city that appealed to him far more potently than these marvellous remains of pagan days. In the monuments of Rome the history of the Church can be traced from the earliest times—from the humble beginnings in the catacombs to the majestic glory of Saint Peter's—from the days of Cephas to the latest vicegerent of Christ on earth. At every turn one comes upon places hallowed by miracles, the blood of martyrs, the lives of saints, the origin of some noble work in the cause of Christ or humanity, or the memories of great and holy Pontiffs. There can be no doubt that the soul of the American prelate, man of God that he was, was deeply stirred when he first set foot upon soil sacred to all Catholics; or that his piety led him to worship at many of these shrines of faith. It is to be regretted that he left no record telling us of his round of pilgrimages, or giving us the impressions made upon his mind. Yet, even at this distance of time, one who has studied the holy bishop's life almost fancies that he can see him as he goes from shrine to shrine, and feel the warmth of his devotion. Doubtless relics pertaining to our Lord or the Blessed Mother, the catacombs, the Colosseum in which so many Christians shed their blood for Christ, the tombs of the apostles, and spots consecrated by the presence of Saint Dominic or other holy members of his Order, appealed to our pilgrim with special force. Doubtless, too, wherever he went, he poured out his heart in prayer for strength to bear his burden, and for grace to live as lived the saints of old.

During his sojourn in Rome, the Pope, cardinals and clergy, moved no doubt not less by the bishop's humility and candor, amiability and piety than by his destitute situation, showed him every mark of favor. Leo gave him twelve hundred Roman crowns, church plate, vestments, books, etc., to the value of another thousand crowns. Among the presents from His Holiness was a magnificent tabernacle that was placed in Cincinnati's first cathedral, and was long "unsurpassed by anything of the kind in the United States." Many members of the Sacred College also gave him substantial proofs of their high regard, and of their sympathy for his poor diocese. Cardinals Consalvi and Fesch, the latter an uncle of Napoleon Bonaparte, were particularly kind and generous. Fesch not only made donations in money, but bestowed upon the bishop several exquisite paintings for the adornment of his episcopal church.<sup>7</sup>

The reader has seen how obstacles soon arose to Bishop Fenwick's plans for the progress of religion in that part of the American Church which had been placed under his jurisdiction. To obviate future difficulties between the dioceses of Bardstown and Cincinnati in the matter of missionaries belonging to the Order the prelate, before starting for Europe, and the provincial of the Dominicans agreed to request the General of the Order to divide the little band of Friars Preacher into two provinces. Accordingly, the province of Saint Louis Bertrand was erected in Ohio, January 11, 1824. Father John A. Hill was appointed its superior, while the learned Father Samuel T. Wilson

<sup>7</sup> *Annales*, as in note 6; *The Catholic Almanac* for 1848, p. 65; SHEA, *op. cit.*, III, 346.—Many documents in the Archives of the Propaganda show the bishop's activity while in Rome, and the favor he was universally accorded.

remained in charge of the older province of Saint Joseph, in Kentucky.<sup>8</sup> The division, however, was conditional—that is, dependent on the consent of the majority of the fathers remaining in the diocese of Bardstown. But, as a future page will show, in default of such consent, this enactment did not take effect, and the province of Saint Louis Bertrand never had a really canonical existence.

As has been stated, the bishop was convinced that a college and seminary in, or near, Cincinnati was essential for the good of religion in his diocese. Now, therefore, that he was abroad, he would leave nothing undone both to obtain means for their construction, and to secure priests to conduct them. He believed, furthermore, that the wisest plan would be to place these institutions under the management of the Order to which he belonged—an Order that was already established in Ohio, and upon which, he felt, the new and unsettled country would long largely depend for its supply of missionaries. Accordingly, in addition to soliciting the wherewithal for building a college and seminary, he sought to interest his European brethren not only in the cause of his missions, but also in that of his educational projects. To further these plans, as well as to secure a

<sup>8</sup> A joint letter of Bishop Fenwick and Father Wilson, without date or address, but evidently written to the General of the Dominicans and carried to Rome by Fenwick (Archives of the Propaganda, America Centrale, Vol. IX); patent erecting Saint Louis Bertrand's Province—a copy in the handwriting of Father Stephen Byrne (Archives of Saint Joseph's Priory, Somerset).—Shea tells us (*History of the Catholic Church*, III, 352) that the original of this patent is in the Archives of Notre Dame University; but we could not find it. Doubtless Byrne's copy was made from this.—It should be noted in this connection that the documents seem to show Bishop Fenwick, pious, meek and just though he certainly was, rather too much inclined to get possession of the little property owned by his brethren. No doubt he was led to this by his straits, and felt that he was justified by the fact that most of what they had came through him.



worthy and able successor to the see of Cincinnati, he urged the appointment of Father Thomas Hyacinth Cipoletti, a learned Dominican who spoke English, as his coadjutor.

Several Friars Preacher—at least three Italians and an Irishman and a Frenchman living in Italy—proffered themselves for the American mission. Unfortunately, though Bishop Fenwick does not appear to have realized it at the time, circumstances abroad and the positions occupied by these fathers were to prevent them from giving their services to the Church of Cincinnati. The character of the friars whom the prelate sought to obtain for his diocese, may be seen from the fact that they were all men of learning and high standing in their institute. One of them, Father Cipoletti, subsequently became Master General of his Order and commissary of the Holy Office.<sup>9</sup>

The Rev. Raphael Muños, however, an ascetic and saintly Spanish Dominican then at Genoa, was permitted to enlist in the cause of the distressed prelate. The same appeal, as a future page will tell, was soon to inspire a young Italian novice with a longing for the missions that was to bring him to America. This was Father Samuel C. Mazzuchelli, whose labors were not only to console the good bishop in his last years, but to make the Milanese friar's name one of the most glorious in the history of the Church in the northwest.

Of a broad, liberal mind, Bishop Fenwick did not confine his search after spiritual shepherds to those of his Order. He wanted other missionaries as well for

<sup>9</sup> These facts were taken from memoranda scattered here and there through Vols. VIII and IX of America Centrale in the Propaganda Archives; and from various letters of Bishop Fenwick and Rev. Frederic Rese contained in Vol. VIII of America Centrale and Vol. 938 of Scrittura Originali.

both the great northwest country and Ohio. He was especially anxious to secure a few conversant with German, the only language spoken by many of the immigrants in the latter state. For this class of the faithful he obtained Rev. Frederic Rese, a young Hanoverian Propagandist who had been ordained in 1822. Another young priest by the name of Murray was assigned to the mission by the Propaganda. But his health failed before he could leave Rome, and he did not reach his appointed field of labor.

One of the prime purposes of Bishop Fenwick's European journey, as has been said, was to free his diocese from the debts with which it was oppressed. Before he left home, the frame church he had erected within the municipal limits of Cincinnati, was becoming too small to accommodate the congregation and the non-Catholics who came to hear the sermons—particularly those of Father Hill. Before he left Rome, letters received from Ohio told his lordship that the need of a larger and more pretentious cathedral was growing daily more and more imperative. He now determined that he would also obtain wherewithal for this laudable purpose. The encouraging information made him all the more anxious that Detroit should be erected into an episcopal see, and convinced him that a bishopric ought also to be established in Indiana. These two new dioceses, therefore, he urged upon the Holy Father and the Propaganda, and received the promise that they would be favorably considered.<sup>10</sup>

Armed with letters of recommendation from Leo XII, the prefect of the Propaganda and other cardinals, Ohio's apostle left Rome, it would seem, early in 1824.

<sup>10</sup> See note 9.

He was accompanied by Rev. Frederic Rese, whom he made his secretary, and who was later to be the first ordinary of Detroit. The sympathy and aid accorded the bishop at the Capital of Christendom had gladdened his heart, buoyed him up, and made him rejoice that he had gone to lay his woes at the feet of the common father of the faithful. Thus, although his lordship had not succeeded in all his efforts for the good of religion in the American Church, and would still fain lay aside the miter, he was now consoled, even content to bear his burden.

On his journey northward he went to Lucca, Florence, Parma, Milan, Savona, Genoa, Turin and other places in the interest of his diocese. Almost everywhere he met with a cordial reception. Leopold II, grand duke of Tuscany, and Charles Felix, king of Piedmont and Sardinia, treated him with exceptional kindness and liberality. At Savona, where he seems to have spent Holy Week, he administered holy orders, confirmed over fifteen hundred persons, and performed other episcopal functions. This he did at the request of his confrère, Right Rev. Joseph Vincent Airenti, O.P., then the ordinary of Savona, but later archbishop of Genoa. At Turin Bishop Fenwick was taken ill, and for a time was obliged to cease from his travels.<sup>11</sup>

It was in the second half of May that our episcopal wayfarer reached Lyons.<sup>12</sup> During his sojourn at Rome, and on his journeys through northern Italy, he had worn the habit of his Order. Nor did he lay it aside

<sup>11</sup> *Annales*, II, 62-63; SHEA, *op. cit.*, III, 346.

<sup>12</sup> The *Annales* say that he arrived at Lyons about Easter, which fell that year (1824) on April 18. But a letter of the bishop to the prefect of the Propaganda, dated Turin, May 12, 1824, shows that he did not reach the French city until considerably later (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. VIII).

in France, a circumstance that caused great wonder and elicited no little admiration. He was most likely the first person who had dared to appear publicly in that country clothed in the venerable garb of Saint Dominic since the abolition of the religious orders by the iniquitous laws of the French Revolution, more than thirty years before. The brave act appealed to a chivalrous people. Indeed, at Lyons not merely was the friar bishop accorded a hearty reception; he was regarded as a veritable apostle.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps no other of the many missionary prelates who, in days past, made their way to generous France in quest of aid for their flocks, was the object of greater esteem or won a warmer-hearted sympathy from the well-known Association for the Propagation of the Faith than the first ordinary of Cincinnati.

Through Italy the apostolic traveller, when possible, had stopped with his religious brethren. At Lyons, in default of a house of his Order, he took lodging at a modest hostel—partly for the sake of economy, and partly out of humility. But his reputation had preceded him. As soon, therefore, as his whereabouts became known, the president of the noted society's central council for the south, in company with a number of its members, hastened to visit him, and invited him to attend a special meeting, probably called for his sake. The bishop modestly consented. In the simple, candid, touching way characteristic of all his utterances, he detailed the desolate situation of his new diocese in the backwoods of Ohio. The hearts of all were visibly moved. Without waiting for him to solicit assistance, the audience requested the president of the council to recommend the prelate's cause to the grand almoner of

<sup>13</sup> The *Annales*, II, 63; *The Catholic Almanac* for 1848, p. 65; SHEA, *op. cit.*, III, 346.



the society. The result was an award of eight thousand francs, with the promise that the see of Cincinnati would be placed on the association's list for its yearly distribution of alms.<sup>14</sup>

Reaching Paris early in June, 1824, Bishop Fenwick went to stay with Father Stephen T. Badin, at the historic hospice *Quinze-Vingt*, founded by Saint Louis, and located, at this time, in the *Hotel des Mousquetaires Noirs*, rue Charenton. At the *Quinze-Vingt* his lordship was visited by John B. Purcell, then a student at Saint Sulpice, but destined to be his successor in the see of Cincinnati.<sup>15</sup> In northern France the way for the bishop was prepared, and his work made easier, by Father Badin, his vicar general or agent abroad.

Through all his travels, the apostolic prelate was consoled and encouraged by letters from his priests at home. In this way he was kept informed of almost daily conversions, the fidelity of his flock to their duties, the increase of the faithful, new parishes forming, and preparations under way for new churches. On his visit to Michigan, two years before, Bishop Fenwick had witnessed the good accomplished for religion by pious ladies teaching in the schools at Detroit. Now, therefore, he sought to obtain some pious women in Europe for works of charity and the Catholic schools which he hoped to establish in his episcopal city. Failing in this,

<sup>14</sup> The *Annales*, as in the preceding note.

<sup>15</sup> Rev. Frederic Rese, Paris, to the rector of the Propaganda College, "Tuesday of Pentecost Week [June 8], 1824" (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. VIII); Bishop Purcell, Cincinnati, to Bishop M. J. Spalding, Louisville, November 26, 1857 (Louisville Archives); J. Matthew de Montmorency, Dampierre, France, to Fenwick, "aux quinze-vingt," Paris, June 20, 1824 (Archives of Notre Dame University).—The *Quinze-Vingt*, that is, fifteen times twenty, or three hundred, was founded for the maintenance of three hundred orphans. Doubtless Bishop Fenwick and Father Badin stopped with the priests in charge of the hospice.

he turned his thoughts to a community of sisters. The French Sisters of Mercy, it would seem, agreed to send one of their members, with a chaperon, to investigate the prospects offered to their order in that part of the New World. In France our prelate also secured the services of two missionaries for the northwest country, Revs. John Bellamy and Peter J. Dejean. Accordingly, towards the middle of August, he despatched Father Rese, with these two priests, Sister Saint-Paul and her companion, from Paris to Bordeaux, whence they were to sail for New York.<sup>16</sup>

Accompanied by Father Badin, Bishop Fenwick then passed into Belgium, where, as the reader will remember, he had spent some ten years preparing himself for the work that lay before him in the land of his birth. Here he met many friends, and received considerable help. From Belgium he sent Father Badin to Holland, while he himself journeyed on to England, which had been his home for another ten years. Bishop Douglass who had shown much sympathy in the establishment of the American province of Friars Preacher, twenty years before, had been succeeded by the Right Rev. William Poynter. But the impoverished prelate found a no less true friend in the new vicar apostolic of London. Doubtless it was at his suggestion that Bishop Fenwick issued an appeal to the English Catholics which appeared in the *Catholic Miscellany* of September, 1824,

<sup>16</sup> The *Annales*, II, 94-96; Marie Pierre Thomas Framilon, Nice, to Bishop Fenwick, "en route to Lyons," May 12, 1824 (Archives of Notre Dame University), Fenwick, Paris, to Archbishop Maréchal, Baltimore, July 13, 1824 (Baltimore Archives, Case 16, W 13); Rev. Frederic Rese, New York, to Bishop Fenwick, London (?), September 5, 1824 (Archives of Notre Dame University); same to the students of the Propaganda, Cincinnati, May 5, 1825 (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. VIII); Fenwick, Cincinnati, to the Mother Superior of the Sisters of Mercy in France, July 8, 1825 (Archives of Notre Dame University).

and in which he gives an account of the missions in Ohio, a brief outline of his life, and the purpose of his visit to Europe.<sup>17</sup>

Bishop Fenwick always retained a deep affection for his English confrères. While in England, therefore, he visited their houses, and left nothing undone to enlist their services in his poor diocese. So, too, as has been told, was he an ardent admirer of the Society of Jesus. Thus he further sought to obtain missionary aid from the English Jesuits.<sup>18</sup>

His lordship's quest in northern Europe extended over somewhat more than two months from the time he left France. Until the end he continued to gain friends, and to make a lasting impression upon all with whom he came into contact. Although he had long been accustomed to privations and labor, hardships and travel, in the forests of Ohio and Kentucky, these exertions abroad, in which he allowed himself little or no rest, were a trying ordeal on his constitution, and tested his strength almost to the breaking point. Yet the holy man could not be brought to think of himself.

Sailing from Liverpool, in the second half of October, 1824, our traveller arrived at New York about the first of December, after a long and perilous voyage. Here his heart was torn at the sight of the arduous labors with which saintly Bishop Connolly, now broken by age and toil, was overpowered through want of priests. From the great American metropolis the re-

<sup>17</sup> J. M. Frene, Antwerp, to Bishop Fenwick, London, October 8, 1824 (Archives of Notre Dame University); same to same (in Cincinnati), Antwerp, December 20, 1824 (*ibid.*); Right Rev. William Poynter, London, to Fenwick, Cincinnati, December 14, 1824 (*ibid.*); Fenwick, Cincinnati, to Rev. S. T. Badin, Paris, April 16, 1825 (Louisville Archives).

<sup>18</sup> Fenwick, Baltimore, to Rev. Francis Dzierozynski, S.J., Georgetown, December 14, 1824 (Archives of the Maryland-New York Province of the Jesuit Fathers, Case 204, H 14).

turning prelate wrote, December 5, to Father Badin, his agent abroad:

I know not how to express my gratitude to Almighty God for His protection and innumerable benefits. I arrived here a few days ago, after a boisterous, rough and dangerous voyage of forty days. Have been busy night and day since my arrival. My poor brother, Bishop Connolly, is much distressed for want of priests. He has lately lost two of his best priests, who lived with him. Both died eight or ten days ago. He has but one at St. Peter's, and another lately ordained. He drudges night and day to the sick, etc. Last night I turned out for him, for I will not allow him to get up at night as long as I can stay here.

You will please to present my most grateful and affectionate compliments and thanks to all the amiable, polite and generous families to whom you so kindly introduced me. I can never forget their kindness and civilities to me. I pray for them and all my benefactors every day. Write to me often, and give me all the advice you know me to require, for I am poor and needy. God help me!<sup>19</sup>

On his way south from New York, the apostolic traveller stopped at Philadelphia to pay a friendly visit to Bishop Conwell and to confer with him on matters discussed at Rome in regard to the American Church. While there, likely in part because requested to do so by some of his brethren in the hierarchy who knew the goodness of his heart and his winning manners, and in part because of his own zeal for religion, the bishop sought to use his kind services for the pacification of the troubles with which the aged prelate of that city was surrounded. Although these efforts failed in their purpose, we can be certain that they were made not only with the best of intentions, but also in the most gracious manner.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *The Catholic Miscellany*, London, IV, 201.

<sup>20</sup> *United States Catholic Miscellany*, III, 398, 399-400.—Without rime or reason, Rev. Joseph L. J. Kirlin (*Catholicity in Philadelphia*, p. 247) at-



Reaching Baltimore towards the middle of December, he went straightway to see his friend and confidant, Archbishop Maréchal. Here the returning prelate intended to remain only a few days. But the discussion of matters pertaining to the general good of religion in the United States, and the affairs of his own diocese, detained him in the east for more than two months. In Maryland, as he had done in England, he sought to obtain one or more Jesuit missionaries for his cathedral city. The last week of his stay in that state the bishop spent with the fathers of that order at Frederick, perhaps in part to rest, and in part to give holy orders to some of their scholastics. There, on March 6, he conferred the priesthood upon Fathers Ignatius Combs and Michael Dougherty.<sup>21</sup>

In the meantime, Rev. N. D. Young, the bishop's nephew and co-missionary in Ohio, and John S. Dugan of Zanesville, in the same state, arrived in Maryland, having journeyed more than four hundred miles in Mr. Dugan's stage-coach to escort their beloved pastor back to his diocese. At the National Capital they were joined by Father Gabriel Richard, rector of the church in Detroit, who was then a member of congress. As the wayfarers were descending a mountain-side near Cumberland, Maryland, the horses became unmanageable, overturned the stage, and spilled the occupants tempts to cast a slur on the bishop's kindly efforts for the peace of the Church in the old Quaker town. Little did that author know the man of whom he so wrote. Father Kirlin should have taken more care to eschew bias, and greater pains to give references to his sources. Had he done this, he would have avoided the above and other errors, as well as have written a more valuable book of history.

<sup>21</sup> Fenwick, Frederick, to Archbishop Maréchal, March 6, 1825 (Baltimore Archives, Case 16, W 4); Rev. J. W. Beschter, S. J., Baltimore, to Rev. Francis Dzierozynski, S.J., Georgetown, February 17, 1825 (Archives of the Maryland-New York Province of the Jesuit Fathers, Case 207, R 4); *Ordinationum Liber* of Saint Mary's Seminary, Baltimore; *United States Catholic Miscellany*, IV, 175.

upon the ground. The three clergymen were fortunate enough to escape with a few slight bruises. But Mr. Dugan received injuries of which he died some hours later in the arms of his episcopal friend.

The victim of this sad accident was an exemplary Catholic who had done much for the struggling church of Zanesville. He was bound to both the bishop and Father Young by intimate bonds of friendship and affection. It was, therefore, a source of much consolation to the prelate that he retained all his senses until the end, received the sacrament of penance and the last absolution, and died without fear and in a spirit of resignation to the will of God.<sup>22</sup> Bishop Fenwick and Father Young accompanied the remains to his home town, where they buried him with all the solemn rites of the Church from the little brick building which the pious man himself had bought and converted into the first house of Catholic worship in Zanesville.

In this way, the bishop's homeward journey was again retarded. Time given in charity, however, he regarded as time well spent because given to God. Thus he did not reach his episcopal city until April. Here he found the young Propagandist, Father Rese, busily occupied with the German Catholics in Cincinnati and its vicinity, but spending his spare moments in the study of English. Fathers Bellamy and Dejean, the two French priests obtained abroad, had gone directly from New York to Michigan to lend a helping hand to Fathers Gabriel Richard and Vincent Badin. Dejean was placed at the mission on the Huron River, while Bellamy made his headquarters on the Raisin River, near where stands the present city of Monroe.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *United States Catholic Miscellany*, IV, 238; *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society*, XXV, 197 ff.

<sup>23</sup> *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, III, 303-321.

Father Rese's arrival had preceded that of Bishop Fenwick by some months. He had notified the vicar general, Rev. John A. Hill, when he might be expected at Cincinnati, and that it would be necessary to prepare a home for the Sister of Mercy who accompanied him. The report soon spread over the town. The curiosity of the people, many of whom had never seen a nun, was aroused to a high pitch, causing them to gather in great numbers to get a glimpse of Sister Saint-Paul. She was the first nun ever in Cincinnati or even the state of Ohio.<sup>24</sup>

The return of their beloved pastor was hailed with enthusiastic joy by the Catholics of the entire diocese, but especially by those of the episcopal city for whom his visit abroad meant so much. Rarely is a spiritual father so deeply loved and venerated as was the first bishop of Cincinnati. His people, therefore, were happy to have him with them again. Many non-Catholic admirers also came to offer the zealous prelate a hearty welcome, and to wish him every success in his efforts for the good of religion.

The man of God now set about making the improvements in behalf of which he had travelled so extensively in Europe. But he did not suffer these to interfere with his pastoral duties. Visitations of the diocese, tours of confirmation and other labors were resumed as though they had never been interrupted. To tell of these, however, will be the burden of subsequent chapters.

<sup>24</sup> Rev. Frederic Rese, Cincinnati, May 5, 1825, to the students of the Propaganda (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. VIII); same, New York, to Fenwick, London, September 5, 1824 (Archives of Notre Dame University); *Annales*, as in note 11, III, 289.—It would seem from Rese's letter to Fenwick that this sister had not yet made her religious profession.

## CHAPTER XV

### NEW DIOCESES AND EPISCOPAL CANDIDATES

WE must now interrupt the story of Bishop Fenwick's labors in behalf of his own diocese to lay before the reader his interest in the welfare of the American Church generally. From the outset, perhaps as a result of his early experience in Ohio and Kentucky, he seems to have been convinced that the cause of religion would be greatly advanced through the country by the erection of more episcopal sees. Indeed, he believed that a bishop should be appointed in every state where there was a promising nucleus of a Catholic mission; for he felt that a cathedral church, with a responsible head, would soon become a center of spiritual activity around which would gather clergy and laity from both the Old World and the New.

Catholicity would thus, he was sure, be more effectually fostered and spread than it could ever hope to be, while the distant congregations were left subject to an ordinary whose remote residence and multiplicity of duties made it impossible for them to receive a visit from their bishop more than once or twice, if at all, in a lifetime. In many parts of the United States, not a few of the faithful were unable to receive the sacrament of confirmation so vital in the life of a Catholic. Often the missionaries themselves, as had been his own case, living hundreds of miles from a fellow-priest, were deprived for six months or more at a time of the consolations of the sacred tribunal. Frequently they could



not have either absolution or extreme unction administered to them at the hour of death. Rarely, if ever, could the lonely ambassadors of Christ enjoy the comforts, the quickening of zeal and the renewal of strength and courage that come from visits of their superiors and fellow-clergy. All this convinced the good bishop of Cincinnati not merely of the wisdom, but even the necessity, of the policy of which we have spoken. This conviction had perhaps been strengthened by late excursions into Indiana and his journey in the northwest.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, as has been seen, while at Rome, he urged upon the Holy Father and the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide* the erection of episcopal sees in Michigan and Indiana, with Detroit and Vincennes as their respective seats. The vast stretch of country along the Gulf of Mexico, then known by the name of Florida, he felt, should have another. Nor was he long returned from his quest abroad, before we find him advocating a bishopric in western Pennsylvania, with Pittsburgh as the episcopal city and a part of old Virginia placed under its jurisdiction. While he was in the Eternal City, Boston was left without an ordinary by the departure of Bishop Cheverus for Montauban, France. New York was also deprived of a spiritual head through the death of the Right Rev. John Connolly, February 6, 1825. These two dioceses now also claimed the attention of Cincinnati's zealous prelate and his brethren in the hierarchy.

Although Bishop Fenwick had a mind and a will of his own, his good common sense and humility often led

<sup>1</sup> Doubtless the labors of the bishop and his priests in Indiana were at the request of Bishop Flaget to whose jurisdiction that state belonged. See extracts of Fenwick's letters to Father Stephen Badin in the *London Catholic Spectator*, I, 350-53.

him to defer to the judgment of others, especially when they were his superiors. He felt, too, that but little good could be effected, unless harmony and unity of action prevailed among those into whose hands providence had entrusted the government and the guidance of the American Church.

His letters show that, although he kept in touch with the other prelates, had won their confidence, and possessed their good will, he looked to Archbishop Maréchal, because the metropolitan of the country, as the logical leader in ecclesiastical affairs. Furthermore, apart from the mutual esteem and friendship that existed between them, Fenwick and Maréchal, although quite different in character, had many ideas in common. For these reasons, they acted in unison in most questions of importance. The letters of that day reveal several clergymen whom they discussed in connection with the various dioceses of which we have spoken, and whom they considered worthy of the miter.

The names of the episcopal candidates that most frequently appear, are those of Revs. Gabriel Richard, S.S., of Detroit, Benedict Joseph Fenwick, S.J., later the second bishop of Boston, and William Vincent Harold, an eloquent preacher and Dominican missionary apostolic then laboring in Philadelphia. Harold was mentioned for the sees of both New York and Boston; Richard for that of Detroit; Fenwick for all three, as well as for Florida. Rev. Enoch Fenwick, S.J., long at the Cathedral of Baltimore with Archbishop Carroll, and a brother of the other episcopal candidate of the same patronymic, was considered for the dioceses of Florida and Detroit; while Rev. John A. Ryan, another eloquent Dominican missionary apostolic at

Philadelphia, was judged suitable for the throne of either Boston or New York. Indeed, Ryan's name occurs quite frequently in the letters of the day in this connection. It is noteworthy in view of much that has been written about them, that the nomination of the two friars, Harold and Ryan, was heartily endorsed by Bishop Conwell of Philadelphia, as well as by Fenwick and Maréchal. Indeed, Conwell, though he felt that he could hardly dispense with his services in the episcopal city, more than once declared Harold to be beyond question one of the most deserving and most capable of the clergymen proposed for the American hierarchy. Similarly, he pronounced Father Ryan "second to none."<sup>2</sup>

The noted priest, Rev. Demetrius A. Gallitzin, was suggested by Bishop Fenwick as one who might be appointed to the see of Detroit. But Archbishop Maré-

<sup>2</sup> We have found no letter of Maréchal to Rome recommending the appointment of either Harold or Ryan for a bishopric. Doubtless the archbishop's well-known strong anti-Irish bias was largely responsible for this. However, Conwell's and Fenwick's letters to the prefect of the Propaganda and Fenwick's correspondence with Maréchal leave no room for doubt that Baltimore's metropolitan approved of the nominations of the two friars, and agreed to send their names to Rome. In this connection, a letter of Archbishop Carroll to Harold deserves to be quoted as showing that illustrious prelate's opinion of the eloquent Dominican. The Archbishop first says that he has received a letter from Bishop Egan stating that he must remove Rev. James Harold (an uncle of the Dominican, but not a member of his Order) from the cathedral. Then he proceeds to write: "In this I concurred with him, knowing how common it is for families and individuals to cease living together, for some incompatibility of humours, without a breach of charity, or causing any disedification. I am still of this opinion, but do not foresee how matters are afterwards to be regulated. My greatest apprehension is your disgust, and consequent determination of leaving Philadelphia, which indeed your letter indicates as a matter concluded on; and which, in my estimation, is one of the greatest misfortunes that can befall that Diocese and the American Church generally. The Bishop, as I have been informed by Mrs. Lucas, is to leave Philadelphia next week, in company with her father, for Baltimore. For heaven's sake, suspend any further proceedings or arrangements till I can see him. . . ." This document is dated February 20, 1813, and is in the Propaganda Archives, *Acta* of 1821, folios 164-65.

chal demurred to this proposal. It was the second time that the metropolitan showed opposition to the Russian prince. Fenwick considered Father Charles Bonaventure Maguire, a zealous Franciscan missionary in western Pennsylvania with headquarters at Pittsburgh, worthy of the miter of that contemplated diocese, or of Indiana. For the latter place he also suggested Rev. Guy Ignatius Chabrat, a zealous clergyman of Kentucky who afterwards became coadjutor to Bardstown.

The old unpleasantness in Kentucky of which we have spoken, had long become a thing of the past. Accordingly, we now find Bishop Fenwick mentioning Father Stephen T. Badin as a probable candidate for either Detroit or Indiana. He was well aware of the veteran missionary's zeal and tireless activity; yet he had some fear lest his harsh ways and extreme severity should make him a person unsuited for so responsible a post. Archbishop Maréchal, however, set himself squarely against this appointment. Another name mentioned by Cincinnati's ordinary in connection with the see of New York was that of Rev. John H. Nerinckx. He was pastor of Saint Aloysius' Church, London, England, and a brother of Rev. Charles Nerinckx, the well-known missionary of Kentucky. Still another clergyman spoken of by Bishop Fenwick as possessing qualifications that fitted him for the miter of the great American metropolis, was Rev. John Dubois who eventually became the third ecclesiastical superior of New York.

It would appear that Archbishop Maréchal of Baltimore, while at Rome (1821-1822) on business connected with his diocese, must have expressed a desire to have a coadjutor. At least we find the Congregation



*de Propaganda Fide* consulting the ordinary of Cincinnati on this matter during his sojourn in the Capital of Christendom. He recommended Rev. William Matthews, the well-known pastor of Saint Patrick's Church, Washington City, as a man eminently suited for the responsible position by his learning, virtues and knowledge of the American people.

Indeed, Bishop Fenwick strongly advocated the appointment of coadjutors for all the American prelates. His purpose in this was most likely to prevent the long vacancies that, owing to the distance from the Holy See, the slow and uncertain mail service of the time and other causes, had often occurred, and had been the occasion of no little inconvenience to the ecclesiastical authorities, or even of evil consequences to religion itself. His views on this subject, as on all things else, he laid before his brethren of the hierarchy in his usual frank, open way. But he did not seek to impose his personal opinion upon them. He was insistent, however, that a coadjutor should be appointed for his own diocese. Unfortunately, as a future page will show, Rome turned a deaf ear to his earnest pleas.

While the friar prelate showed interest in the American Church at large, quite naturally, he was chiefly concerned with his own vast diocese, which he maintained was the most extensive in the world, with the exception of those of New Orleans and Nova Scotia. Ohio in itself, he felt, was too great a burden for him to bear alone in his advancing age and growing infirmities. For this reason, he earnestly begged and exhorted that Detroit should be erected into an episcopal see, with jurisdiction over the country that stretched to the north and west. At first, he believed that the bishop there

should be a native American; or one whose mother-tongue was English, and who had a fair knowledge of the French language. But he soon became convinced that Father Richard's long and faithful labors in that part of the United States, although he spoke English quite imperfectly, gave him a claim to which no other could pretend. Accordingly, in spite of the coldness which some of the hierarchy seemed to show towards this appointment, not until 1829 did his lordship cease to importune Rome for the nomination of the well-known Sulpician, whose zeal, self-sacrifice and virtues were a source of universal edification.<sup>3</sup>

Rev. Gabriel Richard was sent to Detroit in 1798. From 1801, he had been pastor of Saint Anne's, that city, the mother-church of the northwest country.<sup>4</sup> For fourteen years, he was left practically alone to bear the

<sup>3</sup> The sources for Fenwick's activities in these matters are: Notes of the Congregation *de Propaganda Fide*, America Centrale, Vols. VIII and IX, *passim*, and the *Acta* of the same congregation for 1825 and 1826; Bishop Conwell to the prefect of the Propaganda, September 20, 1824 (*ibid.*, Scrittura Originali, Vol. 934); same to same, June 6, 1824, and April 10, 1825 (*ibid.*, America Centrale, Vol. VIII); Archbishop Maréchal to same—letter undated, but evidently belonging to 1825 (*ibid.*, America Centrale, Vol. VIII); Fenwick to same, February 1, 1826 (*ibid.*, Scrittura Originali, Vol. 938); Fenwick to Maréchal, Paris, July 13, 1824; Frederick, Maryland, March 6, 1825; Somerset, Ohio, August 5, 1825; and Cincinnati (?), January 19, 1826 (Baltimore Archives, Case 16, respectively W 3, 4, 6 and 8); Rev. John A. Ryan, Philadelphia, to Bishop Fenwick, Cincinnati, April 15 and May 24, 1825 (Cincinnati Archives).—A number of other clergymen were mentioned for the various sees of which we have spoken. But as they do not appear to have been mentioned by Bishop Fenwick, we did not bring them into our narrative. Thus, it will be noticed, the documents used in the presentation of this phase of our prelate's activities in the cause of religion extend from 1823 to 1826.

<sup>4</sup> The first Saint Anne's was built by Father Delhalle, the martyred Recollect, in 1701, at the time of the foundation of the French settlement out of which grew the present Detroit. Saint Anne's Church, which now stands on Nineteenth and Howard streets, is the seventh, if not the eighth, of the same name that has served the people of Detroit. In spite of various calamities, its parish registers have been preserved unbroken, giving it a record that is perhaps without a parallel among the Catholic Churches in the United States.

burden of the northern missions. Although so immense and so extensive a charge was more than any one man could properly attend to, through tireless energy and indomitable zeal, this Sulpician accomplished great good for religion, especially in and near the territorial capital. Nor was this all. He did much for the cause of education and the civic betterment of the community. A man of broad mind and boundless charity, he was a friend of all, irrespective of creed or color; respected and admired by both the white man and the red. From 1804 to 1818, he toiled on without murmur or complaint in his lonely situation.<sup>5</sup> In the June of this latter year, however, he was gladdened by the arrival of Revs. John Bertrand and Philip Janvier. Both had been borrowed from the diocese of New Orleans, and sent to Detroit by Bishop Flaget. But Father Bertrand left the north in the fall of 1820. Father Janvier remained until Michigan passed from the jurisdiction of Bardstown to that of Cincinnati.<sup>6</sup>

On his appointment to the new see of Ohio, Bishop Fenwick found Father Richard vicar general of the northwest, a position which he had held under both Doctor Carroll and Doctor Flaget. Our prelate at once reappointed him to the same post of honor. At the time of his visit to this interesting portion of his flock, in 1822, Doctor Fenwick saw with his own eyes

<sup>5</sup> Father Richard was the only priest ever elected to the United States Congress. The reader desirous of fuller information on this noted Sulpician and the history of Saint Anne's, and early Catholicity in the northwest is referred to HERBERMANN, *The Sulpicians in the United States*, pp. 166 ff.; *The United States Catholic Historical Magazine*, IV, 11 ff.; *American Catholic Historical Researches*, XII, 66 ff., and XVI, 155 ff.; *Historical Records and Studies*, V, P. 1, 77 ff.; SHEA, *op. cit.*, I, II and III, *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> SPALDING, *Life of Bishop Flaget*, pp. 185-86; *The Detroit Gazette*, June 5, 1818; the baptismal records of Monroe and Detroit.

the effects of the Sulpician's zeal. Thus, his own experience caused him to look to Father Richard as not only a suitable, but the proper candidate for the miter of Detroit.

But this was not all. Late in the spring of 1823, word was received in Michigan that Bishop Fenwick intended going to Rome, and that he hoped to have the capital of the territory erected into an episcopal see. On June 4, therefore, a committee of eight respectable Catholic men, likely selected for that purpose, addressed him a touching appeal in favor of the Sulpician missionary whose long years of faithful service had won the hearts of a grateful people. The letter did not reach Cincinnati until after the prelate's departure. But it was forwarded to him at Rome, and doubtless had its part in determining him to leave no stone unturned in order to secure Father Richard's appointment to the proposed new see in the northwest.<sup>7</sup> That the bishop did not succeed in this project, we think, is to be regretted because it would not merely have given him more time and peace of mind to attend to the Church of Ohio; it would also have rewarded Father Richard for his labors in the north, as well as advanced the cause of religion by the continual presence of an ordinary in that fair portion of the United States.

The contents of this brief chapter might appropriately be called side-lights on the life and labors of Bishop Fenwick. They give a view of his zeal, character and judgment that it would not be possible otherwise to obtain; they illustrate a phase of our American

<sup>7</sup> A letter of appeal to Bishop Fenwick, dated Detroit, June 4, 1823, and signed by John McDonnell, Henry Berthelet, John R. Williams, John Duret, Richard Smyth, James Campeau, Dominic Riopelle and Victor Bouquette (Propaganda Archives, Scrittura Originali, Vol. 938).



Catholic history, at that time, that is none too well known. The friar prelate's efforts to give Father Richard a "square deal" show his honest, candid soul. For these reasons, we venture to hope that the chapter will prove to be of interest to both the general reader and the student. It could not have been omitted from the holy man's biography, without leaving it incomplete by failing to bring out some of his most characteristic traits in the proper light.

## CHAPTER XVI

### JOYS, SORROWS AND LABORS

BISHOP FENWICK'S heart, on his return home, was divided between the conflicting sentiments of joy and sorrow. He had been successful, perhaps even beyond his expectations, in his quest abroad. Yet the aid thus obtained, whether in missionaries or in funds, was by no means commensurate with the needs of the diocese. He had secured four priests; but how could this number properly attend to the missions springing up on all sides? Two of the new clergymen, Fathers Dejean and Bellamy, as has been told, were stationed in the northwest. The other two, Fathers Rese and Muños, were destined for Ohio where many were needed. The prelate had also obtained some ten or twelve thousand dollars. Yet this, even at that date, was no more than a fraction of what was required to carry out the holy man's projects for the good of religion.

Rev. Anthony Ganilh, unable to obtain support from the people over whom he was placed in Michigan, had left that mission during the bishop's absence.<sup>1</sup> And now it was learned that Father John T. Hynes, one of the young Dominicans whom the prelate had ordained shortly after his own consecration, and who had been sent abroad in the interest of the Church of Ohio, was retained in Europe by the authorities of the Order, and was to devote his life to labor among the Indians and

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Anthony Ganilh, Baltimore, to Fenwick, Rome. The letter is undated, but evidently belongs to late 1823 or early 1824 (Archives of the Dominican Master General, Codex XIII, 731).

negroes in British Guiana. Thus the clerical force left at the bishop's disposal was little greater than at the time of his departure for Europe, two years before.

The vicar general, Father John A. Hill, in his goodness of heart and solicitude for the prelate's health, had built a brick residence adjoining the cathedral. It was three stories high, but only twenty feet by sixteen. Thus, though his home was small, the apostle of Ohio, on his return from abroad, was no longer obliged to live in the half-cellar under the church. Yet the self-sacrificing bishop was rather offended by than pleased with this act of kindness, because the expense thus incurred lessened the means which he desired to use for the furtherance of religion.<sup>2</sup>

Before leaving for Europe, he had witnessed Father Hill's zeal, listened to his eloquence, and remarked the salutary effects of his ministry upon the people of Cincinnati. Letters received abroad told of the continuance of such good works not only in the episcopal city, but through all the state. Perhaps, however, the prelate did not fully realize the fruits borne by the efforts of his vicar general, until his return. Now he saw with his own eyes how the people of the town, irrespective of religious convictions, came to hear the eloquent divine. Not merely was the little cathedral filled to its utmost capacity; eager listeners crowded into the sanctuary and perched themselves in the windows, or wherever they could find a footing. Still others gathered in the streets, content with any place where they could catch the words of the noted orator whose voice rang out in

<sup>2</sup> Fenwick, Maryland, to Rev. S. T. Badin, London (?) (London *Catholic Miscellany*, I, 201); same, Cincinnati, to same, Paris, April 16, 1825 (Louisville Archives); Rev. John A. Hill, Cincinnati, to Fenwick, London, August 23, 1824 (Archives of Saint Joseph's Province).

silver tones, and whose overpowering logic silenced all adversaries. Not unfrequently the best known ministers in the city were seen among his audience.<sup>3</sup>

Among Father Hill's many attainments was that of making converts. In this he was no doubt greatly aided by the fact that he himself was a convert, and therefore understood the difficulties and the mental attitude of those without the pale of the Church. Perhaps no clergyman ever wielded a greater power for good in Cincinnati. In the secret of bringing souls into the fold of Christ he was the equal of Bishop Fenwick himself. On some occasions, it is said, he converted whole families at a time.<sup>4</sup>

It was thus a source of deep regret to the apostolic prelate that Father Hill's appointment as provincial of the new province of Dominicans established in Ohio, of which we have spoken, necessitated his withdrawal from the episcopal city, that he might take up his residence at Saint Joseph's, some one hundred and fifty miles away. The bishop wished to retain him at the cathedral; but the general good of the Church seemed to demand that he reside at the house where it was hoped soon to open a novitiate for the education of missionaries for the diocese.

About the time of his return to Cincinnati, Bishop Fenwick received the sad news of the death of his sister, Mrs. Nicholas Young, near Washington City. She was the mother of Father Young, one of Ohio's most faithful missionaries. But perhaps the tender-hearted prelate's greatest sorrow at this time came from the

<sup>3</sup> *Album of the Catholic Churches of Cincinnati*, p. 17; Rev. J. A. Hill to Fenwick, as in the preceding note; *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, II, 94 ff., III, 285-86, and IV, 506.

<sup>4</sup> See note 3 and *United States Catholic Miscellany*, VIII, 111.



deaths of two clergymen to whom he was united not only by a community of ideas, but by a most intimate bond of friendship and affection, Fathers Samuel T. Wilson, and William T. Willett. Both died in the same month, nearly a year before the bishop's return to Cincinnati.

Father Willett had been one of the first students accepted by Cincinnati's future ordinary for his Order at Saint Rose's, Kentucky, shortly after the foundation of that institution. He was a hard student, and possessed a brilliant mind. He was born in Kentucky about 1791. In September, 1816, he was ordained by Bishop Flaget, being the first native son of Kentucky to enter the Order of Saint Dominic, as the first to be raised to the priesthood. The young ambassador of Christ was soon stationed at Lexington, which he made the center of his extensive missionary activities. His piety, zeal and genteel, kindly disposition, together with his fine talents and superior eloquence, endeared him to his brethren, the ordinary of Bardstown and the diocesan clergy. By Bishop Fenwick he was regarded as a model Friar Preacher. The people, irrespective of creed, admired and loved him.

Father Willett's ministrations had been productive of great good to the Church even in a part of Kentucky that was noted for its anti-Catholic prejudice, Lexington and the surrounding country. Bishop Flaget, writing of his and Father Samuel L. Montgomery's labors in the northern part of the state, says: "I repeat with pleasure these two Dominican fathers do wonders." And Bishop Spalding writes of him: "He was a man as remarkable for his talents, as he was for his zeal and virtues. In Lexington he won the hearts of all who

knew him. Humble, affable, charitable, of easy and polished manners, and an excellent preacher, he was an efficient and devoted missionary."

A brilliant future lay before the young friar. But a cold, contracted in the performance of his priestly duties, resulted in consumption and cut short his promising career. After a protracted and painful illness, during which, in spite of his sufferings, he remained at his laborious post, Father Willett died, May 6, 1824. His death was an occasion of deep and universal sorrow. The local paper said of him: "He was an estimable man, and justly merited every testimonial of regret which faithful and sympathetic hearts are accustomed to pay to departed worth. His funeral was attended by a concourse of mourning friends, who sincerely regret the heavy loss they have sustained." The noted author just quoted adds: "He was interred at Lexington, in presence of a vast concourse of people, of all denominations; and his virtues are still vividly remembered."<sup>5</sup> To Bishop Fenwick, by whom he was sincerely loved, his death was as that of a son.

Father Wilson had been, for long years, Bishop Fenwick's most confidential friend, his trusted associate in founding Saint Joseph's Province of Friars Preacher,

<sup>5</sup> Bishop Flaget to Rev. S. T. Badin, June 24, 1822 (London *Catholic Miscellany*, II, 19-23); SPALDING, *Sketches of the Early Catholic Missions in Kentucky*, p. 159; *The Kentucky Reporter*, May 10, 1824.—The decaying inscription (now almost indecipherable) on the good priest's tombstone in the Catholic graveyard, Lexington, reads: "Hic situs est Reverendus Gulielmus T. Willett ex Ordine Praedicatorum, omnibus ob virtutes et doctrinam carissimus, dum hujus Ecclesiae curam gerebat. Ad nonas Maii, A.D. 1824, obiit. Annos XXXV natus. Illius misereatur omnipotens Deus. Amen." The inscription, however, places his death a day too late, and seems to make him somewhat older than he really was. The date of Father Willett's ordination, together with the fact that tradition and Bishop Spalding (*Sketches*, etc., p. 159) tell us that he was born in Kentucky, sets aside the contention that Rev. Robert A. Abell was the first native of the state raised to the priesthood.

and his chief early adviser in the affairs of his diocese. Perhaps, indeed, no other man exercised so strong an influence over the apostle of Ohio—in the guidance of his youth, in the formation of his character, or in the assistance given to one of the greatest works of his life. All this, even though it will necessitate a repetition of not a little that has already been recorded in previous pages, calls for a further word on the noted English divine. To the writer, in fact, no biography of Cincinnati's first ordinary would appear complete without a sketch of this faithful and devoted co-laborer. The careers of the two men are so linked together that they cannot be separated.

Samuel Wilson was born in England, in 1761. His parents were good Catholics, and belonged to the respectable merchant class. He was sent (July, 1770), when a mere boy of nine years, to the college of the English Dominicans, at Bornheim, Belgium. Seven years later, October 14, 1777, he received the habit of Saint Dominic, along with John Fenwick, of whom mention has been made, and entered the novitiate of the fathers, then attached to the college at Bornheim. In religion, he added the name of Thomas to that which he had received in baptism. From the beginning, he won the esteem of his teachers and brethren by his deeply religious character, love of study and extraordinary talents. Because of an edict of Joseph II, emperor of Austria, he could not be admitted to his religious profession until he had attained his twenty-fifth year, although his novitiate was completed in October, 1778. Thus Brother Thomas did not take his vows until December 8, 1785. The same month, he was made sub-deacon. The following March, he was raised to deacon-

ship; and on June 10, 1786 (the eve of Trinity Sunday), he was ordained a priest of God by the Right Rev. Ferdinand M. Lobkowitz, bishop of Ghent.<sup>6</sup>

As a young priest, perhaps even before ordination, Father Wilson had Edward Fenwick for a student. A strong bond of friendship soon sprang up between master and pupil that was broken only by the death of the former. It was at this time, and under these circumstances, that the English friar, through his manly qualities, good judgment and exemplary religious life, won the affections of the future bishop of Cincinnati, and exercised a strong formative influence on the mind and character of the young American student and religious. There can be little doubt but that Father Fenwick consulted his friend and confidant on his aims and purposes in entering the Order of Saint Dominic; that he confided to him his desire of one day establishing it in the land of his birth; and that the two men often discussed the ways and means for best insuring the success of such a laudable enterprise.

When, therefore, as has been seen, the American Dominican felt that the time had arrived for him to set about his long contemplated project of establishing the Friars Preacher in the United States, his first step was to obtain the authorization of his Superior General at Rome. The next was to enlist the services of his English confrère. With Wilson he felt that the pious and patriotic enterprise would surely succeed. Without him all was problematical, if not doomed to failure.

<sup>6</sup> The account and profession books of Holy Cross College and Convent, Bornheim; Father Raymond Palmer's *Anglia Dominicana* (MSS.), P. III A, p. 714; same, notes for the writer, and *Obituary notices of the Friars-Preachers, or Dominicans of the English Province*, p. 24; Register of Ordinations, Ghent, Belgium.



In the meantime, Father Wilson had taught both in the college and in the novitiate at Bornheim, gaining renown as a scholar, philosopher and theologian. At the time of the French invasion, in 1794, he fled to England with his community. In 1795, he returned to Belgium in the capacity of vicar provincial, commissioned to recover, if possible, the province's property that had been confiscated by the revolutionists. By tactful prudence and the medium of a good Catholic friend in Antwerp, he managed to get a partial compensation in French bonds. These, however, were practically useless, except in countries under the control of the Directory. But he finally succeeded, through the instrumentality of the same friend, in purchasing the property, in part payment for which he used these bonds. When the troubles subsided, Father Wilson reopened the college and was appointed its president, in addition to filling the post of vicar provincial. Prior to this time, he had obtained successively the Dominican degrees of lector and bachelor of sacred theology. Now (1802) he was accorded that of master in the same science; but the patent for this degree did not reach him until he had settled in America. He was one of the most distinguished and highly esteemed members of his province.<sup>7</sup>

Still the strong anti-Catholic prejudices of England that bore with special force upon religious, made the outlook for the friar's Order in his own country gloomy indeed. On the other hand, the political turmoil of Continental Europe, together with the fact that the religious orders in the countries subject to France had been

<sup>7</sup> PALMER, as in preceding note; same, *Anglia Dominicana*, P. I, 1794 and 1802, and *Life of Philip Thomas Howard, O.P., Cardinal of Norfolk*, pp. 225 ff., *passim*; Rev. R. L. Concanen, Rome, to Rev. S. T. Wilson, Kentucky (?), January 30, 1806 (Archives of Saint Joseph's Priory).

placed under the jurisdiction of the bishops, made it impossible to reopen the convent at Bornheim, and stood as a barrier against the success of the college and the practice of the religious life. Father Wilson was thus predisposed to accept Fenwick's invitation to join in the American project. Not only with the permission, but even the warm approval, of the Master General of the Dominicans, the English divine left Belgium in the summer of 1805, to join his friend who had preceded him to the United States the year previous.

Early in September, the same year, the friar arrived in Maryland. Thence, after a short respite, he journeyed on to Kentucky, where it had been decided that the little band of Dominicans under Father Fenwick should set up the standard of their Order, and find their field of labor in the American Church. Father Wilson reached his destination at the close of 1805, suffering severely from an accident that he met with on the way. Soon, however, he began his zealous labors which were to continue for nearly twenty years, to bear rich fruit, and to crown his name with a glory that will last as long as the Church of Kentucky.

Previous pages have told of the difficulties he was obliged to contend with there, and of the success God gave his efforts in the cause of religion and education. He and his brethren were the first Catholic educators west of the Alleghany Mountains whose work bore permanent results. Every inch the gentleman and the true priest of God, an exemplary religious, endowed with an abundance of good common sense, ever kindly of manner, courteous, approachable, and admitted to be the most learned man in the west, people came from far and near to consult him on almost every topic. Thus, apart

from his ministerial and educational labors, the great friar wielded a wide influence for good among all classes. In spite of his retiring disposition and his humility, he was twice considered for an American miter. Twice he had the extraordinary privilege, by special papal indult, of assisting Bishop Flaget in episcopal consecrations, those of the Right Rev. John B. David as coadjutor to Bardstown, August 15, 1819, and of Father Fenwick as ordinary of Cincinnati.<sup>8</sup> Bishop Flaget, as has been stated, considered the erudite friar and saintly priest as the shining light of his diocese.

It has been related how, at the earnest and oft-repeated solicitation of Fenwick, Wilson was appointed provincial of the new province of Dominicans established in Kentucky. The letters patent bestowed this office upon him until revocation (*usque ad revocationem*); he held it until death.<sup>9</sup> It is not often that one fills such a position for so long a time (nearly seventeen years) to the satisfaction of all. But this was the English friar's good fortune. Not merely does one look in vain for a complaint lodged against him, except during the temporary unpleasantness with Fathers Badin and Nerinckx; one finds naught but words of the highest praise of him as a man, a priest and a superior. Like a beautiful city set on steep ocean shores, where the waters remain pure and clear even at ebb-tide, Father Wilson was one of those rare, grand characters around whose hallowed names there clings no trace of that which is mean or sordid.

<sup>8</sup> Archbishop Carroll's Letter Book, p. 82 (Baltimore Archives); Fenwick, Georgetown College, to Hill, Rome, June 1, 1820 (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. IV, No. 151); SPALDING, *Life of Bishop Flaget*, pp. 212 and 218.—This author follows Flaget's diary.

<sup>9</sup> Archives of Saint Joseph's Priory.

Tradition tells us that, during his years of teaching, the noted theologian wrote an entire course of theology adapted to the needs of England and America. But shortly before his death his collection of manuscripts suddenly disappeared; and it is thought that, through a motive of exaggerated humility, he committed them to the flames. "Much as we may admire humility [says Doctor Spalding], we cannot but regret the loss which its excess thus occasioned the American Church."<sup>10</sup>

The reader has seen how Father Wilson's obedience to Cardinal Consalvi's command led him to sacrifice his Order. His zeal for religion in Ohio, together with his friendship for Bishop Fenwick, made him ready to make still further sacrifices in behalf of that part of the American Church. His death, however, which appears to have been rather sudden, May 23, 1824, occurred before this plan was put into execution. The event was the occasion of universal regret; but to none was it the cause of greater sorrow than to Bishop Fenwick. To this day Father Wilson's name is enshrined in the affections of the people of Saint Rose's Parish which he served so faithfully, and in the hearts of the members of the Dominican province over whose destinies he presided for many years with judgment and prudence, justice, affection and impartiality. That he knew well how to combine kindness with the austerities of the Order's rule may be seen from the following words in a letter of Father Hill to a friend in England:

I have the Novice House quite to myself, and six fine subjects, and expect shortly to have as many more; the want of lay brothers and the extent of our farm oblige us to work ourselves, which is an interruption to our studies. However, we always keep our

<sup>10</sup> SPALDING, *Sketches of the Early Catholic Missions in Kentucky*, pp. 154-55.



choir very regularly, rise frequently at midnight, and regularly at four o'clock every morning. We sleep on straw beds, our diet is very plain, and our life sufficiently austere; but, thank God, we are all in good health. "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb."<sup>11</sup>

In spite of this drawback to studies that came from poverty, and that was common to all our early institutions, Father Wilson, by paternal care, industry and prudent division of time, managed to prepare and educate priests for the Church who were an honor to their calling. Bishop Fenwick hoped still to benefit by his wisdom and experience in the direction of both his diocese and the province of Dominicans just established in Ohio. It is no matter for wonder then that the death of the learned friar was as the extinguishing of a guiding light in the life of Cincinnati's first ordinary.<sup>12</sup>

Although handicapped for want of means and clergy, Bishop Fenwick's heart was rejoiced at the progress of religion in his diocese, and at the zeal shown by the little band of priests at his disposal. During the prelate's absence abroad, his vicar general, the Rev. John A. Hill, while he made his headquarters at Cincinnati, had travelled and preached extensively through the state, everywhere arousing enthusiasm by his eloquence, and accomplishing much good by his ministrations. He had associated with him in the episcopal city Father Stephen H. Montgomery and the saintly Father Daniel J. O'Leary. The latter, a nephew of the noted Irish Franciscan, Father Arthur O'Leary, as the reader will remember, was one of the three students whom Father

<sup>11</sup> See the London *Catholic Miscellany*, I, 327-28. The letter is dated November 21, 1822.

<sup>12</sup> One cannot help regretting that the modesty of this good and learned priest, by causing him to leave no letters or notes, has made it impossible to write a life that could not fail to be of interest to American readers.

Hill brought from Rome in 1821. He was ordained in 1823 by Bishop Flaget, some months after Bishop Fenwick started on his journey for Europe. Lest Cardinal Consalvi's order should prevent him from giving his services to the missions of Ohio, it would seem, the young priest's profession was deferred until he reached that state.<sup>13</sup>

These three missionaries attended the Catholics scattered through southern Ohio and the western half of the state as far north as Lake Erie. They also extended their ministrations into southern Indiana. Father John H. McGrady had not yet returned from Ireland. But Rev. J. B. V. De Raymaecker had been sent to Saint Joseph's by the vicar general to assist Fathers N. D. Young and Thomas H. Martin. Thence they traversed and retraversed the central and eastern portions of the state in every direction, journeying as far north as Cleveland. The toils of the six friars had borne splendid results.

A fine brick church to be dedicated to Saint John the Baptist had been begun at Canton, but was arrested in its course by the death of its pious benefactor, John Schorb. Now, however, it was nearing completion. Another neat fane of the same material had been erected near the present village of Dungannon, Columbiana County, on land donated by Daniel McAllister. This new building seems to have succeeded a former log church, in the same locality, that had become too small for the congregation. It was dedicated by Father Young under the title of Saint Paul's, on Rosary Sunday, October 3, 1824. Later in the same month, probably the eighteenth, the feast of its patron, Saint Luke's,

<sup>13</sup> Notes of the Propaganda in Vol. VIII of *America Centrale*; the *New York Weekly Register and Catholic Diary*, March 14, 1835.

a neat log church not far from the site of the modern town of Danville, Knox County, was blessed and opened for the faithful by the same missionary.

Saint Joseph's, Somerset, so often mentioned in the course of these pages, had become too small for the growing congregation. Accordingly, late in 1821, or early in 1822, it would seem, a stone addition had been made to the original log structure to meet the needs of the people. About the same date, "a good building of hewn logs" had been erected and dedicated to divine service under the protection of Saint Barnabas near the present Deavertown, Morgan County, some fifteen miles southeast of Ohio's oldest church. In Zanesville a finer and more commodious brick church was under way to take the place of the former warehouse that had been converted into a temple of prayer. Churches were also going up, if not already completed, in McKenzie Settlement, southeastern Indiana, and Booy (?); while other places hoped soon to have their houses of worship.<sup>14</sup>

But one of the first matters to demand Bishop Fenwick's attention, on regaining his diocese, was the erection of the proposed new cathedral which had become imperative. Indeed, ground adjoining Saint Peter's was purchased at once for this purpose and for a future seminary.<sup>15</sup> The corner-stone of the structure was laid

<sup>14</sup> *United States Catholic Miscellany*, II, 164-65, III, 319, and VIII, 238-39; *Annales*, as in note 3, II, 94 ff.; Rev. John A. Hill to Fenwick, as in note 2.—The *Miscellany* (III, 319), evidently by typographical error, calls the Church in Morgan County Saint Bernard's, instead of Saint Barnabas'. In spite of the earlier date given in some accounts, we believe that the first church in Knox County (Saint Luke's, near the present Danville), was built in 1823 or 1824.

<sup>15</sup> Fenwick, Cincinnati, to Rev. S. T. Badin, Paris, April 16, 1825 (Louisville Archives).—Deed Books, Nos. XXI, 158-59, XXII, 574-75, and XXIII, 54-55 (Recorder's Office, Cincinnati), show that Father Hill secured this property for the bishop.

on May 19, 1825. These labors, however, did not deter the zealous prelate from his pastoral toils and tours of confirmation. No sooner, in fact, had he arrived at Cincinnati than we find him busily engaged in the promotion of the Church and in the salvation of the souls entrusted to his care. The following account of an episcopal journey through Ohio which he gives to the secretary of the central council of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith for southern France, cannot, we think, fail to interest the reader:

I have just completed [he writes] a visitation of a part of my diocese. Although the tour neither covered half the diocese, nor extended to its remotest parts, for three months I incessantly traversed the woods and the heights. I went from house to house, catechising, as the occasion presented itself, in the forests and in taverns—again in private homes, and still again in poor rural oratories, whither the people flocked. At times I administered to the same persons, and on the same day, all the sacraments, except holy orders and extreme unction. I often found people, married according to the laws of the land, who had been converted to the faith by reading good books or by conversing with good Catholics—and this without having ever seen a priest in their lives, or even having been baptized. Others, although advanced in years, presented themselves for the sacrament of penance for the first time, as soon as they had the occasion through the presence of a priest.

I had the consolation of seeing my congregations notably increased by frequent conversions. In the course of these three months (for there were two of us), we baptized over a hundred persons, children and adults. At times, in order to expedite the work and to accomplish the greater good, we were obliged to separate for days, or even whole weeks. On one occasion, we brought back to the Church a dozen persons belonging to different families; on another, eight; and so on, in relative proportion, at various places. Wherever the missionaries go, conversions are frequent, even among non-Catholics.



But I cannot as yet flatter myself with success among the Indians. I hope to be able later to give you something about these. It was not possible to extend my travels to them. They are too far away; and affairs recalled me to Cincinnati. However, I do not forget them. I expect some news about these good peoples from Father Richard, whom I charged to visit them, and to communicate to you whatever items of interest he might learn on this subject.<sup>16</sup>

To realize the hardships of those early pastoral visits one must not forget that the bishop was obliged to put up at pioneer homes and wayside inns. Often he had to stay with people deeply prejudiced against everything Catholic. Everywhere his food and accommodations were of the poorest. Nor must we forget that in those days what were honored with the name of roads, were as a rule mere passageways, rough, narrow and almost impassable, cut through the forests. The overreaching boughs might, at times, have led the solitary traveller to imagine that he was in some vast and gloomy cathedral of the Old World, thus serving to lift his lonely heart to God. Not unfrequently it was necessary for the prelate to begin his spiritual ministrations with conditional baptism, and then proceed to administer the other sacraments. Negligence on this point was great in the backwoods of Ohio, and many were found who did not know whether they had been baptized or not. Many of the sick whom the apostolic pastor visited were not Catholics, but desired to die in the bosom of the Church. Often they knew practically nothing about religion; nor had he the necessary time properly to prepare the new converts, even if they were capable of receiving instruction. On such occasions, therefore, he was obliged to rest content with having them recite, with

<sup>16</sup> *Annales*, II, 112-113.

him, the acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition, making them understand, as best he could, the truths necessary for salvation, and getting them to declare their readiness to believe all that the Church teaches. Then he administered the sacraments of baptism, penance and extreme unction, giving also the viaticum when he could. Finally, he encouraged and consoled them, as he knew so well how to do, and left them to die in the peace of the Lord.

Although it is not so stated in the letter given above, want of time was not the only thing that prevented the bishop from visiting Michigan on this occasion. He expected almost any day to receive papal bulls erecting Detroit into an episcopal see, and appointing Father Richard its ordinary. He believed, therefore, that, unless specially invited or obliged by grave reasons to do so, it would show a lack of courtesy to extend his apostolic labors into a region that was soon to come under the jurisdiction of a clergyman actually exercising the sacred ministry there. Of such an offense the kindly prelate was incapable. Had it not been for this, no doubt the northwest, great as were the labors awaiting him in Ohio, would have been one of the first places to enjoy his presence. For he had now begun to be intensely attached to the red man, and was anxious to leave nothing undone for his civilization and salvation.

However, he urged his vicar general for that part of the diocese to visit and encourage the Indians of Michigan and Wisconsin. Not unlikely, indeed, the following letter from the Ottawas to the president and congress of the United States, entrusted to Father Richard to carry to Washington, had its part, together with his own tour to the northwest, in arousing the good pre-

ate's interest in the welfare of these people. The Indians, as is well known, ordinarily bore the names of animals, birds, fishes, etc. Unable themselves to read or write, they got white men to compose their letters, which they signed by drawing rude and grotesque pictures of the objects whose names they bore. This they did in the present instance. The highly interesting document reads:

We the undersigned, Chiefs, heads of families and others of the Tribe of the Ottawas residing at Waganakisi (the Arbre Croche, i. e., Crooked Tree) on the lower eastern shore of Lake Michigan, take this mode to communicate our wants and wishes to our most respected Father, the President of the U. S. We return our best thanks to our Father and to Congress for his and their exertions to bring us, your very affectionate children, to civilization and to the knowledge of Jesus, the Redeemer of the red skins as well as of the white people.

Trusting on your paternal affection, we come forward, and claiming the liberty of conscience, we most earnestly pray, that you may be pleased to let us have a teacher or a minister of the Gospel belonging to the same Denomination of Christians to which did belong the members of the Catholic missionary Society of St. Ignatius established at Michilimakinac, or at the Arbre Croche, by F[ather] Marquet and others of the Order of the Jesuits. During a great many years they have resided amongst us, occupied and cultivated a field on our own ground, and instructed our fathers in the first principles of Christianity and agriculture.

Such teachers we have long since wished and continue to wish to have. Such teachers, appointed by your paternal affection, we invite to come and settle on the same spot occupied, until the year 1675, by F[ather] Dujaunay, that is to say, on the shore of Lake Michigan, near the lower end of our village at the Arbre Croche.

For so doing and granting to us, your devoted children, this their humble petition, we will forever feel very grateful and will

Such Teachers we have long since wished it  
 continue to wish to have. Such Teachers  
 appointed by your paternal affection, we write  
 to come and settle on the same spot forever assigned  
 until the year 1785 by the Treaty of 1763  
 to lay on the Shore of Lake Michigan near  
 the lower end of our Village at the White Birch, Minn.

For so doing & granting to us your devoted  
 children this their humble petition, we will forever  
 feel very grateful and will pray the great Spirit  
 to bless you and your whole Christian family  
 in every way and in every place  
 in every way and in every place  
 on that day the 12<sup>th</sup> of August A.D. 1820.  
 of the Indian Nation of the Lake Superior

John D. Lundy

Thomas D. Lundy

Thomas D. Lundy

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pray the Great Spirit to bless you and your white children. In witness whereof we have made our *Tautems* (marks) on this day, the 12th of August, A.D., 1823.

Alexandre Baurassa Thémains ;

John D. Losly.

Macate Binessi (Black-Bird), the main chief at Arbre Croche ; Pakosigane (Gull), the first chief at Arbre Croche ; Jaguaganai (Crane) ; Walogogue (Black-Bass) ; Inssagon (Bear) ; Okiguri-vanon (Fish) ; Chawano (Spit) ; Giwentarido (Fish) ; Seginicana (Spit) ; Gadabasache (Hare) ; Nisbinici (Eel) ; Gochanae (Bear) ; Ochachibecodo (Stag) ; Michiani (Falcon) ; Chasnigoin (Bear) ; Kakychicohone (Eagle) ; Mideois (Fish) ; Tondagoni (Bear-Foot) ; Omascos (Elk) ; Nakanaci (Duck) ; Pesacige (Eagle) ; Wakechimant (Fish) ; Kinochameg (Deer) ; Ogisthigami (Fish) ; Pidobig (Eagle) ; Nakanikaso (Part-ridge) ; Neskezi (Deer) ; Pakosch (Falcon) ; Sabanimiki (Fish-Hawk) ; Ciwetagan (Trout).

W. Milpiel, père,

Matthew McGulpin.<sup>17</sup>

Four months later, Black Bird (Maccate Binessi), chief of the Ottawas, sent another touching appeal to President James Monroe for a "black robe" at Arbre Croche, like those then instructing the Indians near Montreal.<sup>18</sup> It was impossible that such letters should not rend so tender a heart as that of Bishop Fenwick, and set his zeal aglow for the spiritual welfare of these

<sup>17</sup> Office of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.—This petition has appeared in diverse forms in different publications. We used the original document sent to the United States Government. The text, as will be noticed, has many Gallicisms. On one side of each crudely drawn symbolic signature is written the Indian name of the signer: the French translation is given on the other side. The various scribes employed for this purpose, knowing little of either language, evidently tried to spell both the Indian and the French names euphonically. The result was an error in practically every Indian name; nor are the French names rendered much better. We have followed the original, however, contenting ourself with merely translating the French names into English. There are a number of documents of a similar character in the Office of Indian Affairs.

<sup>18</sup> The *Annales*, II, 103-04; VERWYST, *Life and Labors of Right Rev. Frederick Baraga*, p. 57.

neglected peoples. But of this we shall speak later. Suffice it here to say that tidings of the good work done among the red men by Fathers Richard, Bellamy, Dejean and Badin were a source of great joy and much encouragement to the prelate.

Another source of delight to the good bishop was the report which he received that the French Association for the Propagation of the Faith was to send 12,900 francs (some twenty-six hundred dollars) to aid his poor diocese. This was indeed welcome news in his financial distress. Yet it did not relieve the pressing need for missionaries. For Ohio he was particularly anxious to obtain German and English-speaking priests. He found it expensive to support others until they could learn these languages; and he did not like to inflict on his people sermons in broken English that no one could understand. Shortly before Christmas, 1825, however, he had the happiness of ordaining a young man sent him by Father John Dubois, president of Mount Saint Mary's College, Emmitsburg, Maryland. This was the Rev. James Ignatius Mullon, whose zeal and eloquence were to be the source not only of much consolation to the bishop, but also of great good to religion in Ohio.<sup>19</sup>

The reader has seen how solicitous Bishop Fenwick was to secure a coadjutor. Father Cipoletti of Rome had declined the position, and the Holy Father would not oblige him to accept. Hardly, therefore, had the prelate regained his diocese, when he began to cast about for another clergyman to fill this post. At first, he seems to have thought of Father John A. Ryan,

<sup>19</sup> The *Annales*, II, 113; Rev. John A. Hill to Fenwick, August 23, 1824, as in note 2; Rev. John Dubois, Mount Saint Mary's June —, 1825, and December 30, 1825 (Archives of Notre Dame University).

O.P., of Philadelphia, and invited him to Cincinnati—probably with a view of giving him an idea of the diocese. Then Rev. Francis P. Kenrick, a priest of Kentucky who afterwards became successively bishop of Philadelphia and archbishop of Baltimore, was urgently proposed for the place. Fathers Enoch Fenwick, S.J., and G. I. Chabrat of Bardstown were named as alternatives.<sup>20</sup>

Many reasons conspired to make the prelate most anxious in this matter. First of all were his humility and his zeal for the salvation of souls. Bishop Fenwick always believed himself both unworthy of the miter and incapable of properly guiding a diocese. Incessant long jaunts (for he continued almost to live in the saddle), privations and hardships had begun to sap his strength and to lessen his power of endurance. He felt, therefore, that he should have the assistance of a younger and more robust man in the arduous labors of building up the Church in Ohio. Advancing age, for his immediate family were not long-lived, caused him to fancy that he had not many years to live; and he feared lest his beloved diocese, as had been the case with others, should suffer from a prolonged interregnum. His letters to Archbishop Maréchal speak so touchingly upon these points, that one cannot suppress a regret that the prelate's earnest appeals were not answered at once, and his soul set at rest by the assistance of a younger associate, and the assurance that his work would suffer no interruption when he should receive the divine call.

<sup>20</sup> Rev. John Ryan, Philadelphia, to Fenwick, Cincinnati, May 24, 1825 (Cincinnati Archives); Fenwick to Archbishop Maréchal, February 24, 1826 (Baltimore Archives, Case 21 A, C 2), and May 12, 1826 (*ibid.*, Case 16, W 9).

## CHAPTER XVII

### DEDICATION OF THE CATHEDRAL AND RENEWED EFFORTS

THE reader has seen how Bishop Fenwick had no sooner reached home than he began work on a new cathedral. This, he felt, was one of the greatest needs not only of his episcopal city, but of Ohio. It would accommodate the growing numbers of the faithful in the emporium and its vicinity, and give Catholicity no little prestige, an effectual means of making converts among the early settlers. By dint of strenuous exertions, coupled with the means the prelate had obtained during his journey abroad and subsequent aid from the *Association de la Propagation de la Foi*, the structure rose rapidly for that day. Although not yet completed, the first mass was said in it, June 29, 1826; it was dedicated to Saint Peter, on Sunday, the seventeenth of the following December.<sup>1</sup> Prior to this, in the summer or fall of 1826, he wrote to Rev. Stephen Badin, his agent in France:

The cathedral is nearly finished, and is admired for its great simplicity. Because of its Gothic style, all travellers who have seen both buildings, prefer it to the cathedral of Bardstown. In order to do away with the noise caused by walking on boards, we have made the floor of large square brick tiles. Instead of *trustees* (or churchwardens installed according to an act of the state legislative assembly), we have agents appointed by ourselves. Thus we have no fear of scenes such as have happened in Philadelphia.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, II, 107-08, and III, 275; *United States Catholic Miscellany*, VI, 246.

<sup>2</sup> *Annales*, III, 290.—Unfortunately, this letter is not dated in the *Annales*. Yet the year and approximately the time of the year in which it was written, can be determined from several facts which it contains.



While building the cathedral, Bishop Fenwick did not forget to adapt its plan and location to the scheme which he had formed for a college and seminary. For this reason, a contemporary history, speaking of the Catholics in Cincinnati, tells us:

The Cathedral belonging to this congregation is a neat specimen of Gothic architecture, the plan of which, with some slight alterations, was furnished by Mr. Michael Scott of this city. The building is 110 feet in length; 50 in breadth; 30 from the base to the cornice: and has five handsome windows on each side, 15 feet in height. There are 88 pews on the first floor. The gallery is large and has the orchestra in the centre, which is shortly to receive a splendid organ. The Altar is arranged in good taste, and ornamented with a large and beautiful painting by Verschoot, representing the investiture of a *religious*. There are several other valuable paintings hung around the walls. The interior of the church is handsomely finished, and presents a spacious and elegant room, capable of seating about 800 persons. The edifice for the literary college is to correspond in its exterior with the Cathedral and be connected with it in the rear by the frame church originally occupied by the Society: the whole will then form three sides of a square and when properly ornamented with a steeple, will present a magnificent appearance.<sup>3</sup>

The same facts we learn from a contributor to the *United States Catholic Miscellany*, who further tells us that the building not only "reflects credit on the architect, Mr. Michael Scott," but is "justly admired for the elegance of its structure, correctness of taste, and above all for its chaste simplicity." From him we learn also that the paintings were donations from Cardinal Fesch, and that the one which hung over the main altar (by the Flemish artist, Verschoot) was a representation of the Blessed Virgin giving the Rosary to

<sup>3</sup> DRAKE AND MANSFIELD, *Cincinnati in 1826*, pp. 35-36.

Saint Dominic, not of a religious investiture.<sup>4</sup> Nor must we forget another description by a visitor in Cincinnati nearly two years later. Although a little long, it is too relevant and important to be omitted from the bishop's life. After giving an account of the confirmation of a class of converts, this visitor proceeds to say:

The Cathedral is a neat and elegant building of about one hundred feet by fifty, distinguished on the outside only by the regularity of the brick work, fine Gothic windows, a large cross formed by the pilasters, in front, and a small spire, not yet finished, designed to support a clock; a handsome iron gate and railing separate it from the street. The interior is remarkable for grand simplicity and chasteness of design, finished in the Gothic order. The altar, pulpit and bishop's chair are handsomely finished and richly decorated. The effect produced by the splendid bronze tabernacle, surmounted by a beautiful crucifix, in the midst of ten superb candlesticks of the same material, is truly imposing. There is nothing light, frivolous or gaudy to be seen; dignity is sustained throughout, and imparts an awful solemnity to the performance of the divine service. Thirteen large and choice paintings, presented to the Bishop, I understand, by his Eminence Cardinal Fesch, uncle of Napoleon Bonaparte, embellish the walls. There is a handsome, well-toned organ in the gallery. . . . The floor of the church is paved with tile, which must render it cool in summer, and prevents the great noise occasioned by walking up the aisles, which is a considerable annoyance in churches where the floor is of wood. The good Bishop assured me that he was wholly indebted to the common Father of the faithful, and to other benefactors in Europe for his establishment in Cincinnati, which is, in truth, like himself, modest and unaffected. He has, doubtless, made a judicious, economical and prudent application of the funds, which he received from his transatlantic friends: he has received none from any other source. . . .<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *The U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, VI, 246.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 342-43.—Certainly these descriptions of Cincinnati's second cathedral set aside the gross exaggerations, to say the least, of Doctor

No doubt the pious bishop's soul leaped for very joy the day he was able to consecrate his cathedral to the service of the Most High. Yet, as will be seen, his anxiety and distress were not at an end; nor did the celebration mean for him rest from arduous labors. These knew no surcease. He was obliged to be at once bishop, parish priest and missionary. Indeed, it was fortunate for the zealous prelate that he had so capable and trustworthy an architect as Michael Scott in whom he could confide during frequent and long absences from the episcopal city, necessitated by the small number of his priests and constant calls for spiritual help. Scott, in fact, not merely refused remuneration for his time and services; he even furnished, at his own expense, divers ornaments that gave added beauty and dignity to the sacred edifice. Thus, although the cathedral was under way and the bishop was anxious to bring it to completion, he writes to Rev. S. T. Badin, in the first half of 1826, about a pastoral visit that he had just finished. On this occasion, he travelled through eastern Ohio and was away from home for three months.<sup>6</sup>

The account is not unlike the one given to the same clergyman of another such apostolic journey in the preceding year. This time, however, he says: "I had neither priest nor servant to accompany me through the thick forests. Our poor people would hardly have been able to lodge and board two ecclesiastics without going hungry themselves. Occasionally they were obliged to

Purcell's diary, which would have us believe that the buildings which Bishop Fenwick erected in his episcopal city were of the poorest and miserably constructed. For this diary see *The Catholic Historical Review*, V, 239 ff. For its refutation see the same publication, V, 434-35.

<sup>6</sup> *Annales*, IV, 513, and III, 279-82.—Like the document referred to in note 2, this letter is also without date; but it evidently belongs to the first half of 1826.

give up their miserable bed for me. . . . Often I was so exhausted from talking, praying and preaching that I had not even the courage to eat." The prelate then proceeds to remind the former missionary of Kentucky of his own labors in that state, insinuating that he himself, during these three months, frequently did not break his fast until four or five o'clock in the evening.

To realize these hardships of Bishop Fenwick to the full one must remember that he was then a man nearly fifty-eight years of age, broken in health, and worn out by labor and fatigue. Assuredly that he was able to keep so steadily at his arduous apostolate is proof not only of an iron will, but of support from the hand of God. Assuredly it speaks well for the prelate's zeal that he would undertake such trying journeys alone in order to spare priests for labor on the other missions. His great charity is shown by the way he ever sought to save trouble and expense for his poor people. When we reflect on all this, we are disposed to accept the statements invariably found in the letters of the day which tell us that the number of faithful is everywhere on the increase, and conversions frequent. We are prepared to see Father Rese, telling of the growth of Cincinnati, write: "May religion make as rapid progress there! One is justified in expecting this from the zeal and piety of the saintly Bishop whom heaven has granted to the city, and whom the favors of God appear to accompany."<sup>7</sup>

The same year, the bishop appears to have spent two or three other months among the Indians in northwestern Ohio, but does not seem to have gone into Michigan.

<sup>7</sup> *Annales*, III, 283.—The letter is undated in the *Annales*. Neither is the name of the addressee given; but it was likely written to the editor and evidently belongs to 1826.



Doubtless the few white Catholics along his route were also an object of his solicitous care on this occasion. Father Rese who accompanied him, of course, was taken along to look after the scattered Germans belonging to the fold. Other shorter pastoral visits, together with his ministry at home and work on the new cathedral, filled out the year 1826. On July 2, he had the happiness of dedicating Saint John the Evangelist's, a pretty brick church seventy feet long, forty wide and thirty-five high, which the Catholics of Zanesville had built in their city to succeed the Dugan warehouse. The corner-stone of this church had been laid, March 4, 1825, by Father Young. But Rev. Raphael Muños, of whom mention has been made, having arrived late in the same year, was stationed in Cincinnati, and Father Stephen H. Montgomery was sent to Zanesville to become pastor of that congregation and complete its new house of prayer.<sup>8</sup>

From his two letters to Father Badin previously noted in this chapter, we learn that Bishop Fenwick had now begun keenly to realize how inadequate was the aid obtained abroad to the needs of religion confronting him on all sides. To make matters worse, customs-duty, freightage and wagon hire for the paintings, tabernacle, candlesticks and other church ornaments, of which we have spoken, had greatly lessened the funds thus procured. What was left had been practically consumed in the construction of the cathedral. Zealous although he was for the beauty of the house of God and

<sup>8</sup> Letter of Rev. Frederic Rese, likely to the editor of the *Annales* (*Annales*, III, 285); Fenwick to Badin, as in note 2 (*ibid.*, III, 289); SUTOR, *Past and Present of the City of Zanesville and Muskingum County, Ohio*, p. 159.—Mr. R. J. J. Harkins is in error when he assigns 1827 as the date of the dedication of the church in Zanesville (*Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, XXV, 200).

a lover of art, he begged that no more books, paintings or other unnecessary equipment should be sent, unless all expenses connected with them were paid by the donors. As matters stand, he says, he must be satisfied with the essentials of religion. For the same reason, the churches near Dungannon, at Zanesville and Canton (the latter apparently opened in the previous year), although substantial brick edifices and in actual use, were still without floors and windows.

Nor was this all. The good bishop had the heart of a Saint Vincent de Paul. Besides the missions of Ohio and Michigan, people from all parts had recourse to him for help. As he himself expresses it: "Everybody appeals to me for assistance, as if I had brought a Peru from Europe." He could not refuse when he had anything to give. He was obliged to support the three clergymen, Fathers Rese, Mullon and Muños, stationed in the episcopal city, when they were at home. Yet the receipts from the cathedral, his only source of revenue in the diocese, were not sufficient to keep his horse and pay postage expenses. Fortunately, Fathers Rese and Mullon were often absent on apostolic tours. The Dominicans on the distant missions were obliged to provide for themselves. Indeed, the prelate jocularly remarks that, unless other assistance comes from abroad, he is afraid he will "be obliged to flee the country or undergo the lot of insolvent debtors," which in those days was imprisonment.

But that about which he seemed most concerned, was to secure a lot contiguous to the ground he already possessed and necessary for the proposed college and seminary. He was exceedingly anxious to procure means for the purchase of this land and the construction of

these buildings. The former frame church, it would seem, was being remodelled to be used in part as a pastoral residence, and in part as an educational institution until a better structure could be erected, which was to be the sacerdotal nursery wherein he placed his main hopes for the new diocese.<sup>9</sup>

No doubt it was with a transport of joy that the pious prelate, in his second letter, said to his friend: "You will learn with pleasure that I have two *religieuses* in Cincinnati, Sister Saint-Paul and one of my neophytes from Kentucky, who has become associated with her. The two have a school attended by twenty-five girls. They live by charity."<sup>10</sup> Sister Saint-Paul, as the reader will remember, had been sent from France, in 1824, by Bishop Fenwick with Fathers Rese, Bellamy and Dejean. An ardent advocate of Catholic schools, he had sought at an earlier date to bring Dominican Sisters from Kentucky for that purpose. Failing in this for the same reason that had thwarted the attempt to obtain members of his Order for the missions, college and seminary, he turned his thoughts to foreign sisterhoods. Now he rejoiced at the prospects of forming a community of Sisters of Mercy under his own supervision. Theirs was the first sisters' and the first Catholic school in Ohio—and probably the state's first free school. But of this we shall speak again in the next chapter.

Another source of keen delight to Bishop Fenwick was the spirit of self-sacrifice shown by his missionaries both in Ohio and in Michigan. They "appear content

<sup>9</sup> For the facts related in the last three paragraphs see letters referred to in notes 2 and 6. See also a letter of Rev. Frederic Rese on the transformation of the old cathedral into a seminary (*Annales*, II, 159).

<sup>10</sup> *Annales*, III, 289.

[he says] with their state of poverty, which obliges them to wear coarse homespun and at times even threadbare clothing.”<sup>11</sup> In this, however, they but followed the example of their mortified bishop who bore hardships and privations, not only without murmur of complaint, but with joy that he might further the cause of religion and himself become more like Christ who suffered all things for the world’s redemption and salvation.

As a contributor to the *United States Catholic Magazine* (VI, 25) states, through nearly all Ohio “was the white habit of St. Dominic hailed by the lonely Catholic as the harbinger of glad tidings, and the symbol of the joy, the purity, and the triumphs which attest the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the fulfilment of the promises made by her divine Founder to the church.” In every direction these friars had traversed and retraversed the wild forests, sought out forlorn members of Christ’s fold, reconciled them to God, dispensed the bread of life, and made converts to the Church. For nearly a score of years, they alone had “borne the burden of the day and the heats” and suffered the hardships of that desolate mission. It was but natural, therefore, that they should be remembered by a grateful people in the day of somewhat greater prosperity. Thus we find property donated to them in Zanesville, Canton, Brown County and perhaps in one or two other localities. The land at Canton and in Brown County was given with the understanding that educational institutions should be erected thereon by the Order.

This was certainly in accord with the hopes and the early plans of Bishop Fenwick. So, too, is there every

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.



reason to believe that, at first, he was much pleased with this development. But unfortunately tares were sown in the promising field; pressure was brought to bear on the honest ordinary which caused him to fear that he might be accused of favoritism towards his Order, even if he did not violate the laws of justice or decorum. There can hardly be any doubt but that it was under such an influence that our prelate, in the spring of 1826, wrote in a somewhat complaining spirit to Archbishop Maréchal anent the acquisition of property by his Order.

All this [he says] was done in my absence, and by a *presumptive* or *tacit consent* on which the clergymen, my brother Dominicans, acted. I wish to know from [the] Propaganda if it is correct, and if I can consent to it; or what is to be done. You will please, in case Bishop Dubourg is gone and does not see this statement, to transmit the substance of it, when you write to Rome, and request an answer instructing [me] what to do.<sup>12</sup>

The point at issue was the delicate question of adjusting the respective rights of the diocese and the Dominican Order in regard to the property to which we have referred. But as we shall touch on this matter again, suffice it here to say that the bishop and his brethren, all the while, remained the closest friends. As far as we have been able to ascertain, they indulged in little, if any, criticism or faultfinding. Nor have we discovered any breach of charity. The bishop's thorough religious training gave him not only strength to stand, but an elasticity that enabled him to bend, when necessary, and quickly to recover himself. Seldom did he lose his balance. The friars, on their part, deeded over to the ordinary the property that had been conferred

<sup>12</sup> Bishop Fenwick, Saint Joseph's, near Somerset, to Archbishop Maréchal, May 26, 1826 (Baltimore Archives Case 16 W 10).

upon them. But, on the discovery of his error, he returned it to the Order.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, although poorly fed, almost barefoot and half naked, the fathers ceased not from their tireless labors, or to bear the burden of extreme poverty with a fortitude and patience worthy of a Paul of Tarsus or a Dominic of Guzman. Their white habit and black mantle continued to be a "harbinger of glad tidings" and a "symbol of joy" and salvation to the lonely missions of Ohio. One may gage their zeal by the fact that two of them, on actual computation, found that, from May, 1826, to the end of the year, each had ridden horseback, "exposed to the extremes of heat and cold," twenty-five hundred miles in the fulfillment of their pastoral duties.<sup>14</sup>

But let us return to Bishop Fenwick's letters to Father Badin. From these we learn the progress of religion in Ohio from 1822 to 1826. On the Easter Sunday of the former year there were not a dozen communions in the cathedral of Cincinnati; on the same feast in 1826 there were at least three hundred. The number of churches in the state had increased to eleven. These were Saint Joseph's, Perry County; Saint Mary's, Lancaster; Saint John the Evangelist's, Zanesville; Saint Barnabas', Morgan County; Saint Paul's, Columbiana County; Saint Luke's, Knox County;

<sup>13</sup> The Bishop's will and various deeds show how he returned all the property in question to the Order except that in Brown County. This exception was doubtless made by agreement. Shea missed the mark when he wrote: "Bishop Fenwick found, however, that deeds had been made out to the order, and not to the diocese, for the property in Brown County, Zanesville, Canton, and other places. Mild as he was, and strongly attached to the Order of St. Dominic, he could not sanction these steps, which had been taken without his knowledge" (*History of the Catholic Church*, etc., III, 352-53).

<sup>14</sup> Rev. Anthony Fahey, O.P., Somerset, to the Most Rev. Hyacinth Cipolletti, Rome, October 1, 1835 (Archives of the Dominican Master General, Codex XIII, 731); *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, VI, 246.

Saint John the Baptist's, Canton; Saint Dominic's in the southeastern portion of Guernsey County that was later taken to form a part of Noble County; Saint Martin's, Brown County. As the cathedral was likely not included in the number given by the bishop, the tenth church was probably that at Booy which Father Hill tells us was under way in 1824. Its location, however, we have not been able to determine. The eleventh would seem to be that of Saint John the Baptist's, in the McKenzie Settlement, a colony of Catholics from Maryland who had taken up land in northern Dearborn County, Indiana. Father Hill tells us again that a church was in course of construction there in 1824. Although it belonged to the diocese of Bardstown, it was attended from Cincinnati. Five of these pioneer temples of prayer were constructed of brick: three were those of Zanesville, Columbiana County and Canton. The cathedral was of the same material, while Saint Joseph's was partly of stone.<sup>15</sup>

The same letters inform us that there were, at this time, four missionaries in Michigan and nine in Ohio, whence three had departed.<sup>16</sup> Those in the northwest, as the reader will remember, were Revs. Gabriel Richard, F. V. Badin, John Bellamy, and Peter J. Dejean. In Ohio the missions were attended by Revs. Frederic Rese, one of the vicars general, and James I. Mullon,

<sup>15</sup> See note 11. Father Hill's letter to Bishop Fenwick, speaking of the churches of Booy and McKenzie Settlement is dated, Cincinnati, August 23, 1824, and is in the Archives of Saint Joseph's Province. But on this settlement see also *The Catholic Telegraph* of July 3, 1835, and Alerding's *History of the Diocese of Vincennes*, pp. 375-76 and 379-80. For Saint Martin's on the "East-fork of the little Miami" see *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, VI, 246. See the same and also page 390 for Saint Dominic's, in Guernsey County. The other churches mentioned here have already been referred to in the course of these pages.

<sup>16</sup> See note 11.

and the Dominican Fathers John A. Hill, also vicar general, Nicholas D. Young, Stephen H. Montgomery, Thomas H. Martin, John B. V. De Raymaecker, Daniel J. O'Leary and Raphael Muños. Father John T. Hynes, as has been stated, had been sent to British Guiana, while Father John H. McGrady, owing, it would appear, to a dislike for Fathers Hill and Reese, had not returned to that mission. Although the prelate's letter seems to say that another clergyman had left Ohio, we have not been able to learn his name. Rev. Anthony Ganilh, however, had quitted the Church of Michigan and gone to Mobile. About this time, it would seem, Bishop Fenwick ordained Rev. Francis Marshall, a native of Pennsylvania; but he did not remain long in our prelate's service.<sup>17</sup>

These letters to Father Bâdin reveal Bishop Fenwick's heartfelt gratitude towards his benefactors abroad, among the most generous of whom was Charles X, king of France. Here also he begins to unfold a scheme that was near to his heart. His experience as a pioneer missionary and bishop had convinced him not merely of the wisdom, but even of the necessity of having two or three itinerant clergymen in Ohio such as he had been in that state and in Kentucky. The congregations with churches, or with prospects of having their houses of prayer in the near future, were more than the priests at his disposal could properly attend. But besides these there were individuals, isolated fam-

<sup>17</sup> HOUCK, *A History of Catholicity in Northern Ohio*, etc. (ed. of 1903), 1, 380; REILY, *Conewago, A Collection of Local Catholic History*, p. 86.—Different dates have been given for the ordination of this good priest. Certainly he could not have been ordained by Fenwick in Ohio from May, 1823, to April, 1825. The absence of his name from all the correspondence of the days seems to show that he was in Ohio for only a short time, and even to make it questionable if he were ordained in that state.



ilies or small communities belonging to the faith scattered here and there through all the diocese. The only way to have such members of his flock instructed and kept in the fold, the zealous prelate felt, was a little band of missionaries at large, whose sole duty would be to search out and visit Catholics thus situated. Some of his own best work as a priest had been done along these lines.

In addition to this, these free ambassadors of Christ, the bishop was convinced, could accomplish much good by preaching broadcast, explaining Catholic doctrine, and dissipating prejudices against the Church. He knew of no more effective way of spreading religion or of establishing parishes and Catholic settlements—in a word, of building up the Church in Ohio. Indeed, until his death, the zealous prelate did not give over this idea; nor did he cease from his efforts to obtain priests for this purpose and the means for their support. It was in part to realize this plan that, early in 1827, he sent Father Rese to Europe.

Indeed, the pressure of missionary work made it necessary, before the close of this year (1826), for Father Hill to leave Saint Joseph's and become the first resident pastor at Canton. This step, because it delayed the opening of a novitiate at the former place, was much regretted by both the bishop and the vicar provincial. Yet, under the circumstances, there was no alternative. But as we learn from two contemporary authorities, the sorrow caused by the removal of this eloquent divine from his logical home was lessened by the arrival of some Colettine Poor Clares from Europe. These good sisters at once opened a school in Cincinnati, and soon had some sixty or seventy pupils, besides attending "a

numerous school of poor children on Sundays.”<sup>18</sup> Their labors in the episcopal city, however, like those of the French Sisters of Mercy, were to be of short duration. Still these earlier efforts for Catholic education were an augury of other endeavors along the same lines soon to be crowned with success in both Cincinnati and Somerset, and to be a source of unspeakable joy to the good bishop, as well as of incalculable blessings to religion in Ohio. But of this we shall speak on a subsequent page.

<sup>18</sup> DRAKE AND MANSFIELD, *Cincinnati in 1826*, p. 35; *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, VI, 246. The Drake and Mansfield's city directory referred to appeared in 1827. It contains a number of historical items. The letter in the *Miscellany* was evidently written by one of the missionaries of Ohio, and appeared in the issue of February 24, 1827. Both testimonies, therefore, are by eye-witnesses. Nor is there the least sign of bias or exaggeration in their statements. There can, therefore, be no doubt but that the Poor Clare Sisters opened a school in Cincinnati. The letter of Rev. C. B. Maguire of Pittsburgh, quoted by Sister Mary Agnes McCann (*History of Mother Seton's Daughters*, I, 147-48) to prove the contrary, bears too evident signs of huff and ill humor to be reliable. Certainly it cannot stand in the face of the calm statements of the two other authorities.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE JUBILEE OF LEO XII, MISSIONS OF THE NORTHWEST AND SOME SET-BACKS

It is a custom of the papacy, dating back many centuries, for each new Pope to proclaim a jubilee in commemoration of his being chosen to fill the chair of Peter. Leo XII, because of the troublous times, was urged by most of his friends to dispense with this long-honored practice. But on Ascension Day, May 12, 1824, he issued a bull announcing a jubilee to signalize the memory of his election as successor to Pius VII. The spiritual exercises began in Rome the next Christmas. Again, on December 25, 1825, he published the *Exultabat Spiritus Noster*, by which the jubilee was extended to the rest of the world. To Ohio this event had a special significance. It was the first time the Catholics of that new diocese had ever been called upon by the Vicar of Christ to unite with all Christendom in prayer and thanksgiving, and "in offering a holy violence to the throne of grace."

A hundred years ago, plenary indulgences were by no means proffered to the faithful with the frequency to which our generation has become familiar. Accordingly, this season of grace and benediction, besides being a novelty to them, made a strong appeal to Bishop Fenwick's flock, and may be said to mark an epoch in the history of his diocese. By none was the occasion of overflowing blessings welcomed more heartily than by the holy prelate himself. He welcomed it both for him-

self and for those entrusted to his charge. The authority to extend the benefits of the jubilee to his people reached Cincinnati, perhaps, in the summer of 1826. Likely, however, the bishop was absent on an apostolic visit. Be this as it may, what with his busy life and with work on the cathedral, in which the jubilee was to begin, the time of joy and grace was not promulgated until Christmas Day, 1826. In Cincinnati, the mission given for the holy purpose extended from December 25 to January 1, and was accompanied with happy results. The devotion and faithful attendance of the Catholics at the spiritual exercises, in spite of the "extreme rigor of the season," was most gratifying. Non-Catholics also attended in numbers, and several were received into the Church.<sup>1</sup>

It was Bishop Fenwick's intention to begin a tour of Ohio immediately after the jubilee exercises in Cincinnati, in order to give the Catholics of that state an opportunity to reap the advantages of the season of grace as early as possible. The Holy See allowed him two years for the promulgation of the jubilee in the various portions of the immense territory under his charge. The last twelve months he doubtless wished to devote to Michigan and the northwest. But cold weather and torrential rains retarded this apostolic visit of the diocese. Meanwhile, Rev. Frederic Rese who had given a helping hand in Cincinnati, started to Europe on business for the prelate.<sup>2</sup> This deprived the missionaries of a

<sup>1</sup> The *United States Catholic Miscellany*, VI, 246 and 390-91.—The other facts concerning the jubilee, until it was opened at Wooster, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the same sources.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop Fenwick to the grand almoner of the *Association de la Propagation de la Foi*, January 20, 1827 (*Annales*, III, 287-89).—Father Rese took this letter with him to France.



much-needed assistance for those who spoke only the German language.

Late in January, or early in February, 1827, however, the bishop, leaving Father Muños in charge of the episcopal city, started by boat for Wheeling. Thence he journeyed westward, promulgating the jubilee among the scattered Catholics along the way. Rev. J. I. Mullan travelled from Cincinnati on the same spiritual errand through Clermont, Brown, Highland, Ross and Pickaway or Hocking counties into that of Fairfield. Father N. D. Young appears to have taken still another route. The two missionary priests met at Lancaster, where they opened the jubilee on the fourth day of March. Rushville, in the same county, was the next place to claim their attention.

From Rushville they proceeded to Saint Joseph's, near Somerset, Perry County, which had been appointed a rendezvous and a center of spiritual activities. Here they were joined by Bishop Fenwick who had completed his lonely labors farther to the east. This parish, as has been seen, was the first fruit of the venerable prelate's apostolate in the north. The zeal and devotion shown by the people on the present occasion must have been gratifying to his pious soul. They came to the exercises mostly afoot, many walking a distance of eight or ten miles. Not a few, indeed, brought provisions, wrappings, etc., and remained on the ground during the eight days of the mission. Doubtless, to save time, the jubilee blessings were extended to the people of Somerset simultaneously with Saint Joseph's; for Holy Trinity, a brick church that had been lately built in the town, though not yet completed or dedicated, was in use. At this time, the bishop had the

further happiness of blessing a new log temple of worship in the eastern part of Perry County, about ten miles from Ohio's mother-church. He placed it under the protection of Saint Patrick. Thence he and his companions passed on to Saint Barnabas', Morgan County, and Saint John the Evangelist's, Zanesville.<sup>3</sup>

At the close of the jubilee in Zanesville, Bishop Fenwick was called to Canton by the sudden illness of Father Hill. Although exhausted by fatigue and infirmity, the prelate made the journey of some ninety miles without respite on horseback. Fathers Young and Mullon proceeded to Saint Dominic's, Guernsey County, where there were about forty Catholic families, nearly all converts to the faith. From Saint Dominic's they journeyed to the south into Monroe County, and thence northward, administering to the Catholics and preaching to others along the way, through Belmont, Harrison, Jefferson, Columbiana and Stark counties

<sup>3</sup> The *Miscellany's* correspondent calls the church in Zanesville Saint John the Baptist's; but we are inclined to think this a typographical error for John the Evangelist. Certainly tradition tells us that the church was dedicated to the apostle. When a young priest, the writer spent some time in Zanesville gathering notes on early Catholicity there. The old people were of one accord that the name of this fane was Saint John the Evangelist's. Messrs. Robert J. J. Harkins, Lewis H. Dugan and William Colerick, the two former of whom had served the first mass said in the edifice, begged us to insist on this fact, if we should ever write anything on Catholicity in Zanesville, as Father George A. Wilson later sought to give the church the name of Saint John the Baptist's. The first church in Canton was dedicated to the precursor of our Lord; and it does not seem probable that two churches in a diocese with so few temples of prayer would have the same patron. The *Catholic Almanac* for 1833 calls this church Saint John the Evangelist's; then it appears simply as Saint John's until 1840. In 1841, Father Wilson, a convert from Methodism, being pastor and Father Francis Cubero, just from Italy, assistant, it is called Saint John the Baptist's; in 1842 it has the name again; in 1843, it is simply Saint John's; and in 1844, the new church is called Saint Thomas Aquinas. Father Cubero notes in the records that the church is Saint John the Baptist's. But this proves nothing. For these reasons, we are of the opinion that Zanesville's second church was Saint John the Evangelist's, and accordingly so designate it through all the bishop's life.

until they reached Canton. Here they were again joined by the bishop who was acting as missionary and parish priest to take the place of his sick friend. He regretted his separation from the other two spiritual harvesters, but they brought him consoling reports of their labors. The people of Canton were now given an opportunity to reap the benefits of the jubilee. The congregation of Saint Paul's, Columbiana County, with which the reader has been made acquainted, next claimed the attention of the zealous ambassadors of Christ. Up to this point in their perigrinations, they had the consolation of opening and blessing two or three new churches, besides Saint Patrick's in Perry County; but we have not been able to ascertain either their names or their locations.<sup>4</sup>

From Saint Paul's our messengers of grace and peace travelled west again into Wayne County to confer the advantages of the jubilee upon a small congregation, not many miles from the town of Wooster, and composed largely of converts from the followers of John Knox. In this settlement the missionaries found a small church nearing completion. By invitation, one of them preached in the courthouse of the county-seat, a Presbyterian stronghold, to an audience composed almost entirely of non-Catholics.<sup>5</sup>

In the account of the promulgation of the jubilee at this place is found an item that deserves to be recorded in the bishop's life as showing his spirit of sacrifice and the fruit borne by his early labors through Ohio. On one of his northern journeys from Kentucky, he heard

<sup>4</sup> For these new churches see also Bishop Fenwick's letter (September 8, 1827) in the French *Annales*, III, 293-94.

<sup>5</sup> *United States Catholic Miscellany*, VII, 86-87.—The letter is dated: "St. John's, Ohio, 29th Aug., 1827"; but Saint John's is evidently an error for Saint Joseph's.

that there was a solitary Catholic in Wooster. This sufficed to cause him to ride nearly a hundred miles out of his way. Arriving in the town, he sought out the individual whom he found to be an Irishman by birth, a well-to-do merchant, married and with a large family. Before the zealous friars left, he not only reconciled the husband to God, but received his wife and children into the Church. So thorough was their conversion that their exemplary lives caused many of their friends to become Catholics, thus forming the nucleus of the congregation of which we have just spoken.<sup>6</sup>

From Wooster Bishop Fenwick and his companions went southward through Holmes County, stopping eight days at Saint Luke's, Knox County, to minister to the Catholics of that neighborhood. Thence they journeyed back to Saint Joseph's, but sought out the scattered faithful wherever they could be found along the route. At Mount Vernon and Newark they preached, on invitation, in the court-houses. Towards the end of August they again reached their rendezvous, weary and exhausted, but consoled by the fruits of their efforts.<sup>7</sup>

Through all these peregrinations, the good bishop's zeal led him, in spite of his age and infirmities, to bear his share in the arduous labors of the occasion. Wherever he went, he administered the sacrament of confirmation and used his special gifts to reconcile sinners with their God, or to bring dissenters into the one fold of Christ. Worn out though he was by toil and exertions, the prelate could not be brought to think of rest. A class of converts awaited him in Cincinnati that they might be confirmed. So he now continued his way from

<sup>6</sup>The name of this gentleman was Edward Gallagher. Few, if any, of his present descendants, strange to say, belong to the Church.

<sup>7</sup> See note 5.



Saint Joseph's to the episcopal city. Here he arrived early in September, after an absence of seven months or more.

The accounts of these apostolic labors, found in a public print of the day, reveal but one regret on the part of the bishop's missionary companions—the absence of their ordinary from those places to which he could not accompany them. The clergy always loved to have him with them, for he was as a ray of sunshine in their midst. He was never happier than when laboring with his priests. On this occasion, those engaged in the jubilee wished to profit by the impulse that came from his zeal, the people everywhere to be benefited by the presence of their holy and beloved chief pastor, and the bishop to enjoy the consolation of witnessing the fervor and piety of the faithful. Still another matter well worthy of note in this connection is the character of the sermons preached, a proof of our prelate's wisdom in the direction of his priests. All their discourses were doctrinal, calm and sober. All were designed to make the people realize the value of the soul, the importance of salvation, the purpose of the jubilee and the meaning of the spiritual exercises given to them; to explain the doctrines of the Church; to show her divine institution; and to prove her commission from Christ to teach all nations and to carry on His work until the end of time. Care was taken to wound no feelings. Censure and harsh words were studiously avoided. It was out and out Father Fenwick's method, a method that helped him to bring many a convert into the Church, as well as numerous sinners to repentance. It is without surprise, therefore, that we read how, all along their route, the missionaries were invited to preach in court-houses, sec-

tarian churches, or public places—in a word, wherever an audience could be gathered. Everywhere questions, objections, or even open discussions were invited. When these arose, whatever the character, the responses of the missionaries were courteous, to the point, and satisfactory. In many places Protestant vied with Catholic in attending the spiritual exercises, or listening to the sermons. Apart from the numbers brought to the sacraments and repentance, it is estimated that, by the close of the jubilee in Ohio, some four hundred converts were received into the Church. Doubtless many other well-meaning people were also started on the way that ended in their finding peace of soul in Catholicity.<sup>8</sup>

We have not been able to follow Bishop Fenwick through the rest of 1827; but it was likely largely spent in the promulgation of the jubilee through southeastern Indiana and those parts of Ohio nearer the episcopal city. For the reasons already assigned, he had not visited the northwest since the year of his consecration. Yet he preserved the keenest interest in that portion of his flock. As has been seen, one of his first cares, on becoming bishop, was to provide Michigan with a more plentiful supply of missionaries. With the advent of Fathers Bellamy and Dejean, although documents erecting Detroit into a diocese were almost momentarily expected, our prelate ordered Rev. Francis V. Badin to be sent on a visitation of the missions remote from the proposed seat of the new see. Because of the lack of priests, these places had long been neglected. The pious ordinary's soul, therefore, yearned to extend a helping hand to the forlorn Catholics of those parts.

<sup>8</sup> At Lancaster, a very respectable Protestant minister, with his wife and family, was received into the Church. See the *Annales*, IV, 508–09.

Accordingly, Father Badin left Detroit, April 27, 1825, on his long journey. His first stop was at the island of Mackinac which was to be the center of his apostolic activities in the northwest, and which had been without a pastor from the time of the suppression of the Society of Jesus. From Mackinac he journeyed on to Green Bay, Wisconsin. Here the people had not seen a priest but once in fifty years or more. Their hearts, therefore, were overjoyed at the arrival of Father Badin. The indefatigable missionary spent two months at this settlement; during his stay, he had the satisfaction of seeing the French Canadians, Indians and those of mixed breeds join hands in the erection of a wooden church forty-five feet by forty. The humble temple of prayer he dedicated to Saint Francis Xavier, likely in memory of the former missionaries of the country.<sup>9</sup>

From Green Bay Father Badin returned to Mackinac, but pressing invitations from the Indians at Arbre Croche caused him to hurry on to that mission. Prior to this, he had urged the red men here to erect a special wigwam to the "Master of Life." On his arrival, however, he was agreeably surprised to find a neat little fane of unhewn logs, twenty feet by seventeen, and situated on the crown of a hill. It was built without other tool than the tomahawk, and was protected on the outside by bark, while the interior walls were ornamented with well-wrought boards. The only iron used in the structure was that for the hinges of the doors. A row of benches stood on each side. The Indians had also

<sup>9</sup> The facts for this (Father Badin's first) visit to the north are taken from extracts of his letter to his brother, Rev. S. T. Badin, given in the *Annales*, II, 119 ff.; and from still fuller extracts in the Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. VIII.

prepared planks for an altar; but not knowing how it should be put up, they waited for the "black-robe" to superintend its construction. As he arrived at the old mission on the feast of Saint Vincent de Paul, Father Badin dedicated the church to that apostle of charity.<sup>10</sup>

From Arbre Croche the missionary returned once more to Mackinac, but soon proceeded to Sault Sainte Marie, the most northerly point of his tour. Thence he retraced his steps to Drummond Island. There, owing to occasional visits by a priest from Canada, he found the Indians fervent and exemplary. From this island he returned, for the third time, to Mackinac, where he found Black-Bird, the chief of the Ottawas at Arbre Croche, who had, by some chance, been absent at the time of the missionary's stay at that post, and had come to meet him in order not to lose so favorable an opportunity of receiving the consolations of religion. This meeting, it would seem, led to the second visit which Father Badin now paid to that chief's people. The next place to claim the priest's attention was the old mission of Point Saint Ignace, in the northern peninsula of Michigan. Here, he writes, he was deeply affected at the sight of the outlines, then clearly traceable, of the former Jesuit college in that locality. Returning thence to Mackinac again, the missionary continued his work on the island until November 14, when he sailed for Detroit which he reached three days later, after an absence of nearly seven months.

All these journeys of Father Badin were made by water, on vessels ranging from the stately steamboat to the frail bark canoe of the Indians. Wherever he went, he was warmly welcomed by the forlorn Catholics of

<sup>10</sup> On this church see also a letter of Rev. P. J. Dejean, *Annales*, III, 315.



the north, and even by many not of the fold. His ministrations were not only consoling to himself, but productive of much good among the people. Although many abuses had crept in, the faithful priest was both surprised and edified to see how the French Canadians, the red man and those of mixed blood, in spite of long neglect and circumstances the most adverse, had clung to the faith, retained the memory and traditions of their quondam missionaries, and even still knew hymns that they had been taught years before. These they sang with great devotion at mass and the spiritual exercises given by Father Badin. At Mackinac, he found that much of the former altar equipment had been preserved with such religious care that it was almost as good as new.

The results of this visit to the north and west were reported to Bishop Fenwick. He was much pleased, for they told him the great good that might be accomplished for the spiritual welfare of the Indians, if only he could obtain priests to labor among them. Accordingly, in April, 1826, we see the same missionary, no doubt because so instructed by our prelate, starting on another tour to the places of which we have just spoken. Father Badin's intention, on leaving Detroit at this time, was to continue his apostolic journey as far as Prairie du Chien, in the southwestern extremity of the present state of Wisconsin. In this, however, likely owing to his work at the other missions, the zealous man seems to have been disappointed. He spent the winter on Mackinac and Drummond islands, and at Sault Sainte Marie. At Mackinac, he caused the old church of Saint Anne to be moved and rebuilt. But in the spring of 1827 he went on to Green Bay, whence he

made his way to the far western mission, travelling along the Fox River to Portage City, and thence descending the Wisconsin to its juncture with the Mississippi. At Prairie du Chien Father Badin found that the mission had been visited by only one priest in more than sixty years. This was Rev. Joseph Dunand, a Trappist, who had called there in 1818. In spite of this, a spark of faith still lingered in the hearts of the French Canadians and those of the Indians who had been converted by the former missionaries. Unfortunately, however, the red men of this locality were then on the war-path, a circumstance that prevented Father Badin from building a chapel, as he had intended. Indeed, for a time, his life was in danger. The peril along the route of his westward journey seems to have induced the good priest to return to Detroit by way of Saint Louis and Cincinnati.<sup>11</sup>

Nor were the reports of the apostolate of Father Badin the only good news that the bishop received from the northwest. Rev. John Bellamy had done much to advance the cause of religion at Monroe and in its neighboring missions. At "Baie-Miamis" he had constructed a pretty church. Doubtless this temple of prayer was in the vicinity of the present Maumee Bay, and probably on or near the site now occupied by the city of Toledo, Ohio, a territory that was long claimed by Michigan. Rev. Peter J. Dejean had accomplished still more. Under his care a modest pastoral residence and the church of Saint Francis de Sales had arisen on the Huron River, Saint Felicitas' on the Saint Clair River, and another whose name we have not been able to learn, in the village of Anse Creuse. Father Badin

<sup>11</sup> See a letter of Father Richard In the *Annales*, III, 329 ff.

had also erected a chapel on Lake Saint Clair, dedicating it to the Apostle of the Gentiles. Still another endeavor of his clergy in the northwest for the good of religion in those parts that gladdened the zealous prelate, was an effort to establish a community of nuns to whom they gave the name of Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Bishop Fenwick was the more interested in this pious enterprise because the object of the institute was the education of Catholic youth than which nothing was nearer to his heart.<sup>12</sup>

In 1826, Rev. Apollinaris Herman, a young French priest lately ordained in Kentucky and probably recommended by Bishop Flaget, placed himself under the jurisdiction of our prelate, and was sent directly to Michigan.<sup>13</sup> This was likely to enable Father Badin to make the long tour of which we have just spoken, to the neglected missions in the more northern and farther western country. It was likely the same circumstance, together with a report that Detroit would certainly soon be made an episcopal see, that led to Father Dejean being sent, in 1827, to promulgate the jubilee at Mackinac and Arbre Croche. Bishop Fenwick himself, just returned to Cincinnati from his first tour in behalf of the jubilee, speaks thus of the labors of his clergy in both Ohio and Michigan:

In the month of July, I think, or thereabouts, I wrote to you from Canton, Ohio, where we were holding the jubilee.<sup>14</sup> I told you then how greatly God has blessed our labors—of the numer-

<sup>12</sup> The facts given in this paragraph are taken from letters of Rev. P. J. Dejean, *Annales*, III, 318-19 and 321.

<sup>13</sup> For Father Herman see *United States Catholic Miscellany*, VI, 39, and *Annales*, III, 318-19 and 321.

<sup>14</sup> The jubilee at Canton and surrounding missions closed in May. So the letter referred to by the bishop must have been written at the end of that month, or early in June, 1827.

ous conversions, of baptisms without number, of the return of sinners to their religious duties, and of the increase of our churches. I blessed three new churches on that apostolic tour. My good missionaries in Michigan accomplish wonders. The indefatigable Father Badin, my eldest son by ordination [that is, the first secular priest ordained by the bishop], has visited the Indians in the northwest two years in succession. I have requested him to send the Association a detailed account of his efforts. I should like to give you the few facts that I myself have received concerning his labors, but have not the time. I shall, therefore, merely say that I could not even tell you all that God has done for me in Ohio among both the white people and the red.<sup>15</sup>

Prior to this, January 20, 1827, the prelate had written to the grand almoner of the French charitable association to thank him for the alms allotted to the diocese of Cincinnati. In this connection, the poverty-stricken bishop says:

Thanks to Divine Providence and the charity of our benefactors, our cathedral is finished. It is decent, even beautiful for this country; but it has exhausted my funds. I fear lest my faithful and indefatigable missionaries will succumb to their excessive labors, and that this new vineyard of the Lord may be left without evangelical laborers: "*Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci.*"<sup>16</sup>

Indeed, in all his letters to friends abroad, Bishop Fenwick refers to the tireless zeal of the priests laboring under him, his fears that their great privations and incessant toils may ruin their health, and the prodigies which they accomplish for the good of religion, although they are so few in number. He feels that God is good to him beyond his merits. The want of more mission-

<sup>15</sup> This letter was written, September 8, 1827, and is in the *Annales*, III, 293-94.

<sup>16</sup> The *Annales*, III, 288.



aries, in fact, was one of the greatest drawbacks to that part of the American Church under Doctor Fenwick's care. The departure of Father Herman for Martinique and Father Bellamy for China, before the close of 1827, therefore, was a severe blow to his heart.<sup>17</sup> For these reasons, in a letter of date September 8, that year, after telling how he had not been able, during the tour of Ohio, "to visit and console good and holy Father Richard, whose lot [he says] is truly to be pitied, the anxious prelate proceeds to write:

His [Father Richard's] situation is painful for him and heart-breaking for me. He does not cease calling for missionaries. If you can send him a reinforcement of some good priests endowed with constancy and ardent zeal, you will relieve him very much and oblige me infinitely. As for myself, in Ohio, I can employ only those who know English well. To obtain such as these I depend on Fathers Rese and [S. T.] Badin.<sup>18</sup>

Scarcity of priests and oppressive poverty, however, were not the only drawbacks to the efforts of the holy prelate at this time. As has been stated, from the outset, he regarded the Catholic education of youth, both male and female, as one of the prime duties of a bishop's office. Accordingly, he had hailed the coming of Sister Saint-Paul, the French Sister of Mercy, as he would have welcomed the appearance of an angel in his episcopal city. One may imagine more easily than portray the delight afforded Doctor Fenwick's heart at the opening of a school under the direction of this devoted lady. Doubtless his joy was enhanced by the prospects of making a foundation of this order in Cincinnati,

<sup>17</sup> For the departure of these two clergymen see the *Annales*, III, 320-21.

<sup>18</sup> See note 15.—Father Rese and the elder Father Badin, as will be remembered, were in Europe. One of the principal purposes for sending Rese abroad was to obtain missionaries.

through which he hoped to obtain a supply of Catholic teachers for his diocese. But these fond expectations were soon blasted by the untimely death of the one upon whom he had mainly depended for the success of the pious enterprise. We cannot do better than let the fatherly bishop tell his own sorrow and disappointment at the loss of good Sister Saint-Paul.

I am on the point [he writes in his letter of September 8, 1827] of suffering an irreparable loss. Good Sister Saint-Paul was to be placed at the head of a religious community which I yearned to establish; but God has disposed otherwise. She is on her bed of pain, perceptibly wasting away from day to day. We have no hope left for her recovery. This misfortune distresses me all the more because the other *religieuses* left me are not strong enough to make a foundation.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, the period of which this chapter treats was perhaps one of the most trying in Bishop Fenwick's career. It was then, therefore, that the thorough training of his early years stood him especially in good stead. For the holy man's former religious life, as may be seen from the documents of the day, was not merely a source of strength and courage upon which he drew liberally; it was as good leaven that gave savor to his ministrations, and caused them to be the more effective in winning souls to God.

<sup>19</sup> See note 15.

## CHAPTER XIX

### COMMISSARY OF THE DOMINICAN MASTER GENERAL. SUSTAINED ZEAL

WE must now retrace our steps, in order to lay before the reader the trend of events that led to the bestowal of a singular honor on Cincinnati's first ordinary. On the death of the learned Father Samuel T. Wilson in May, 1824, he was succeeded by Rev. William R. Tuite as superior at Saint Rose's, in Kentucky. Though a quiet, unobtrusive man, retiring and much given to study, Father Tuite was not wanting in active zeal for the salvation of souls. He was deeply beloved by the people, a good sign of true worth. Tradition tells us that no pastor of the congregation ever labored with greater success for its spiritual welfare; the truth of which is borne out by the fact that, during the jubilee of 1826 and 1827, the number of confessions heard and communions given at Saint Rose's Church alone, not to include the other places attended by the fathers, nearly doubled that of any other mission in the diocese. Bishop Flaget himself, referring to this matter in a letter to Bishop Fenwick, says that the profound impression made on him by the fervor and piety of the parishioners at this time caused him publicly to congratulate them and their pastors on so splendid a manifestation of zeal and Catholic faith. In the writer's boyhood days, the older members of the parish used to speak with reverence of how, for years after Father Tuite's death, earth was taken from his grave as from that of a saint. Yet he was not to escape trials; but

these no doubt were destined by a kindly providence further to purify his soul in the sight of God. His memory is still held in benediction.<sup>1</sup>

As the reader will remember, because of an agreement between Bishop Fenwick and Father Wilson, Rome, in 1824, issued a decree making Ohio and Kentucky two distinct provinces of Dominicans. The enactment, however, was to become operative only on condition that it should be favored by a majority of the friars in the southern state. Largely through the opposition of Father Tuite, this measure failed to receive the required sanction, and accordingly became ineffective. In this way, although a pious, inoffensive man, he seems to have incurred the displeasure of those who advocated the division. Rev. John A. Hill who had been appointed vicar provincial in Ohio, appears to have been especially incensed at him. Nor was this all. True priest of God though he was, an excellent religious, and a most zealous and efficient missionary, loved and admired by nearly everyone, Father Hill at times lacked judgment, and on occasions failed in charity. He suffered his chagrin, it seems quite certain, to carry him so far as to make complaints to Bishop Flaget against Father Tuite's government of the little southern community. It is possibly the tradition of his action in this matter that has prevented Father Hill from being held by the province in that reverence to which his zeal, virtues and ability should entitle him. Rev. Frederic Rese also, likely with a desire thus to aid the Church of Ohio, appears to have been an accessory to

<sup>1</sup> Flaget to Fenwick, October 10, 1827 (Archives of Notre Dame University); A brief account of the Jubilee of Leo XII in the Diocese of Bardstown, Kentucky—in Italian and the handwriting of Rev. Francis P. Kenrick (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. IX); WEBB, *op. cit.*, pp. 203, 208-09.



this criticism. All this, there can hardly be any doubt, was largely the motive behind several complaints against Father Tuite sent to Rome by Bardstown's ordinary. With that saintly prelate's action, however, we are concerned here only in so far as it had its influence in the bestowal of a new honor upon Cincinnati's first bishop, and a new manifestation of Rome's high regard. Suffice it to say that we are convinced Doctor Flaget, possibly misled by others, was too hasty, and had little, if any, reason for his remonstrances.<sup>2</sup>

Bishop Fenwick, failing to obtain the assistance he had so often requested through the appointment of a coadjutor, now conceived the plan of having Ohio made a prefecture apostolic under the care of the Friars Preacher. He was led to this in part by the hope of more surely obtaining assistance from abroad, and in part as a measure of justice to that Order.<sup>3</sup> Its members had been the first missionaries in the state; alone, until the eleventh hour, they had borne the burden of the day and the heats; they had threaded their way along the streams and traversed the gloomy, solitary forests in all directions, bringing souls to Christ. The

<sup>2</sup> Rev. John A. Hill, Cincinnati, to Bishop Fenwick, London, August 23, 1824 (Archives of Saint Joseph's Province); same, Saint Joseph's, to Rev. Vincent La Marche, Rome, August 1, 1825 (*ibid.*).—In the Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. IX, are several letters from Bishop Flaget that touch on this topic. Owing to the conditions and the missionary status of the country at that epoch, the relations between the bishops and religious were not then so clearly defined as they are today. Father S. L. Montgomery also came in for criticism. Yet he was perhaps as much loved by the people as Father Tuite, and is still held in deep veneration. He was for years vicar general in Nashville. The province's ordo for 1864 says of him: "*Prudens fuit in consilio, regularis in vita, et caritate non ficta fulsit.*" Written at a time when it was rare for the ordos to speak of the virtues of the departed, this encomium means much.

<sup>3</sup> There seems to have been some idea, probably suggested by Father Hill while at Rome, of requesting such a prefecture even before Cincinnati was made a diocese.

seeds of faith had been sown by their hands, and its flowers watered with their tears and the sweat of their brows. In this way, nearly all the ecclesiastical property in the diocese, with the exception of the cathedral, had been bestowed upon them by the faithful. But this amounted to little, and was but a poor recompense for their hard, faithful and patient labors. Fairness to their Order, therefore, the holy prelate felt not only justified, but demanded, such a prefecture. He believed, too, that the good of religion would be advanced by this course. Furthermore, as the future ordinaries, for years to come, would thus be taken from the Order, the welfare of Cincinnati's bishops would be better safeguarded, as well as more harmony assured among the missionaries, if they principally belonged to the same organization. Yet another reason advanced in favor of the measure was its necessity, in order the more certainly to secure the success of an institute that had deserved so well of the Church in Ohio. There were still, it would seem, only two clergymen in the state who were not friars—Rev. Frederic Rese and J. I. Mullon; and Rese at least strongly advised the project of a Dominican prefecture apostolic.

Accordingly, Father Rese was sent to Rome by Bishop Fenwick for the purpose of securing the establishment of such a prefecture apostolic in Ohio. He left Cincinnati in January, 1827, and took with him two letters from the prelate (one to the prefect of the Propaganda, and one to the Holy Father), in both of which, for the reasons given, this project was strongly advocated. The same messenger appears to have been the bearer of a third document. This was from Rev. John A. Hill pressing the Order's General to co-

operate with the bishop's plan. As the decree of division had not taken effect, because it had not been favored by the majority of the fathers in Kentucky, Hill would have that enactment formally annulled, the Province of Saint Joseph suppressed, and a new one organized under the name of Saint Louis Bertrand, with its headquarters in Ohio. He now thinks that it would be better both for religion and for the Order if all the fathers were placed under one jurisdiction, as their united action would be more effective for good.<sup>4</sup>

Father Rese reached the Eternal City, May 26, 1827. By this time, Father Tuite's term of superiorship had expired, and the Most Rev. Joseph M. Velzi, Vicar General of the Order at the time, had determined to give the friars a voice in the selection of their provincial. On August 23, 1827, therefore, he wrote to Father Tuite authorizing him to convoke the brethren in chapter and to forward the name of the one whom they judged best suited for that office. The same letter declared that, as the former papal decree dividing the province had not been confirmed by a majority of the members in Kentucky, which had been stipulated as necessary for the instrument to become operative, the division had never really taken effect; and that thus there was but one province.<sup>5</sup> Before the appointment of a new provincial could be made, Fenwick's petition for a Dominican prefecture apostolic in Ohio and Flaget's complaints brought together Cardinal Cappellari and Archbishop Caprano, respectively prefect and

<sup>4</sup> Bishop Fenwick to the prefect of the Propaganda, January 12, and to Leo XII, January 15, 1827; Rev. John A. Hill to the Most Rev. Joseph Velzi, January 12, 1827. All these documents are in the Propaganda Archives, *America Centrale*, Vol. IX.

<sup>5</sup> Rese to Fenwick, Rome, June 30, 1827 (Archives of Notre Dame University); Velzi, as in text (Archives of Saint Joseph's Province).

secretary of the Propaganda, and Father Velzi. On April 20, 1828, these three signed and submitted to the approval of the Holy Father an agreement which, because of its singularity and intimate connection with the bishop's life, demands a place in our volume.

The points of this peculiar instrument are: 1° The division of the province which had been formerly decreed, shall be annulled, and there shall be only one province. 2° Under the circumstances, it will be better for the general good if the bishop unites in himself both the episcopal office and that of ordinary superior over the Dominicans; accordingly, the Holy Father shall be requested to grant a dispensation from the Order's constitutions, so that Velzi can confer this power of commissary or vicar of the Order's General on Fenwick for life. 3° Out of the farms or other funds possessed by the province there shall be established, by apostolic authority, an annuity of three hundred dollars to be paid to the ordinary of Cincinnati, in case he is not a Dominican. 4° In the future, whatsoever the friars, as such, obtain, whether in personal property or real estate, shall belong exclusively to them; and conversely, whatever the bishop obtains shall belong to him. 5° The cathedral, with all its appurtenances, is to remain diocesan property. 6° All church furnishings, vestments, etc. (evidently those in Cincinnati), unless they are positively possessions of the Order, shall pertain to the Cathedral.<sup>6</sup>

This extraordinary arrangement was approved by Leo XII, May 11, 1828; and ten days later, Father

<sup>6</sup> This *résumé* is taken from a manuscript copy of the agreement, in an Italian hand (Archives of Saint Joseph's Province). The arrangement, together with the papal brief of approbation, is published in the *Jus Pontificium de Propaganda Fide*, Rome, 1891, IV, 694-96.



Velzi sent Bishop Fenwick letters patent appointing him the head of Saint Joseph's Province until death. It goes without saying, however, that the humble prelate was not pleased with either document. They placed upon him a new load and a new honor for which he had no taste, put an added burden, without compensation, on the missionaries who he felt should be protected and rewarded for their long and faithful services, and failed to grant an iota of what he had asked.<sup>7</sup>

The first article of the agreement had already been settled by Father Velzi himself. The last three were matters of common canon law. It should be noted, however, that the fourth article insists on the right of religious orders to accept property given to them, a matter about which there had been some misunderstanding the previous year.<sup>8</sup> The reason for the sixth and last ordination was the fact that the fathers in Ken-

<sup>7</sup> That Rome failed to grant the saintly prelate's petition was perhaps due, in part, to the fact that Fenwick wrote again to the prefect of the Propaganda, December 15, 1827, requesting Rese's appointment as his coadjutor (photostat copy in Archives of Saint Joseph's Province). But this apparent fickleness is explained by the state of the bishop's health and Rese's letter referred to in note 5. This letter gave the prelate to understand that there was little likelihood of getting the proposed prefecture apostolic established. Thus, sick and worn out by his apostolic labors, he no doubt thought it wise to seek the appointment, before it was too late, of one who was not only well acquainted with and friendly to his views, but favorably known at Rome. Two later letters of Rese to the bishop, dated respectively Rome, May 22, and Lyons, July 26, 1828 (Archives of Notre Dame University), show that he felt that he had obtained everything he had been sent to obtain. Yet they indicate, at the same time, that he either did not have a clear idea of his commission, or misunderstood the meaning of the Cappellari-Velzi agreement.

<sup>8</sup> The bishop's letters referred to in note 4 show that he had now recognized his error in regard to the property spoken of in chapter XVII; for he had given his consent to all these transactions. Thus that matter does not appear to have been discussed at this time. It is referred to, however, by the bishop in a later letter. He held most of the deeds, as commissary general, until his death, but left the property to the province in his will.

tucky had loaned some of their best vestments, etc., to the cathedral of Cincinnati.<sup>9</sup>

The third item of the agreement, we doubt not, was as repugnant to the good bishop, as it was to the friars themselves. Likely the only reason that he did not protest against it, or endeavor to have it annulled, was his inability to obtain relief from the Propaganda, and the hope that the blunder might be remedied by his successor, who he doubtless prayed would be taken from his Order.<sup>10</sup> Yet, as is evident from Father Rese's letters, as well as from his own, the humble prelate cannot be accused of partiality. His heart was big enough to embrace all, and his life shows that its affections went out to all with equal tenderness. His purpose in soliciting the institution of such a prefecture apostolic was the better to promote the cause of religion, to insure harmony, to safeguard Ohio's first missionaries, and to make them some reward for their sacrifices and their long, faithful and fruitful labors until they had securely

<sup>9</sup> This explains that part of the bishop's will in which he left some vestments, etc., to the province.

<sup>10</sup> Right or wrong, there is a tradition in the province (and it has found expression in some letters) that this burden came through Father Rese. In the Propaganda Archives, Vol. IX, there is a schema of the possessions of the Dominicans in Ohio which belongs to that period, and was evidently furnished by him. Cardinal Cappellari and Father Velzi certainly used this schema when they imposed the annuity on the province. Not only did it put an exorbitant value on the property; it confused diocesan possessions with those of the Order, and assigned to the fathers houses, etc., that did not belong to them. This latter likely came from the fact that Rese was under the impression that all ecclesiastical property, with the exception of the cathedral, was to be turned over to the Order. His letters show him to have been candid and well-disposed in the matter. Yet, pious, zealous and brilliant though he was, he seems to have had an unpractical mind. Similarly, Velzi was more of a scholar than a man of affairs. The fathers always felt that the annuity was put on them under erroneous information, and that therefore it did not bind in conscience. Nor could they, with the best of good-will, have paid it in their state of abject poverty, without starving themselves. However, after the bishop's death, the matter was the occasion of some unpleasantness.

established themselves in a part of the Lord's vineyard which they had won for Christ.

Doubtless there were some who, quite naturally, preferred not to see the province under the jurisdiction of a bishop; yet, because of the love and high esteem in which Doctor Fenwick was held by all, not a voice seems to have been raised in protest. On the receipt of the letters patent making him the superior of the province of Dominicans which he had established, the bishop set off for Kentucky to visit Saint Rose's. While there, August 21, 1828, he forwarded to Cincinnati letters instituting Rev. Raphael Muños prior of the southern convent to succeed Father Tuite. The fact that the document is in the handwriting of Father Tuite reveals the good-will of that humble religious, speaks well for his spirit of obedience, and shows, even were there no other proof, that Muños was not sent there for the purpose of re-establishing discipline as Bishop Spalding, evidently deceived by some letters of his predecessor, was led to believe.<sup>11</sup>

During the latter half of 1827 and the first of 1828 our prelate was obliged to redouble his exertions, as Fathers De Raymaecker and O'Leary, whose health had been undermined by their excessive labors on the missions, were sent abroad for a rest. There, however, they interested themselves in behalf of Ohio's Church. Before their return, Bishop Fenwick had met with another loss in the departure of the Poor Clares. Heterogeneous in its make-up the little community had not succeeded in Cincinnati. It was, therefore, determined to send them to Canton, where Father Hill hoped to establish a college and academy. On the way, they

<sup>11</sup> See Spalding's *Life of Bishop Flaget*, p. 288.

stopped at Pittsburgh, and were induced to remain in that promising town.<sup>12</sup>

But this was not the only loss the apostle of Ohio suffered during that year. The great heat in the summer of 1828 resulted in an epidemic of fever which multiplied the labors of the bishop and his priests. None proved themselves more active among the sick and dying than Father Hill who fell a victim of his zeal on the third day of September, fortified by the rites of the Church. He was the first priest to die in Ohio. His untimely death was the cause of deep regret to all, irrespective of creed. Canton, it would seem, came almost *en masse* to pay him its last respects and to be present at his funeral.<sup>13</sup> How the demise of this faithful missionary was felt by the bishop may be seen from the following extract from a letter to a friend in Europe.

I beg you to make known to Father Rese the disastrous and painful loss that I have just undergone in the death of my vicar general, the Rev. Father Hill, who fell a victim of charity on the third of this month. He died at Canton of a violent fever, following a long and laborious pastoral visit which he made around Lake Erie during the great heat in the months of July and August. In a letter that he wrote to me, August 17, he assured me that God had overwhelmed him with consolation in the midst of his toils. He made a number of converts, baptized twenty-two adults, among them an Indian or two, rehabilitated four marriages, and heard so many confessions that he could not remember the number. The greater part of the Catholics whom he visited, had not seen a missionary among them for three or four years.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Rese to Fenwick, July 26, 1828, as in note 7; same to same, Rome, November 24, 1827 (Archives of Notre Dame University); Rev. C. B. Maguire and Sister Mary Frances Vindevoel to same, Pittsburgh, April 28, 1828 (Cincinnati Archives); *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, VI, 246.

<sup>13</sup> Father De Raymaecker's notes.

<sup>14</sup> The *Annales*, III, 298. Here the *Annales* give the date of this letter as December 10, 1828; but IV, 506, corrects the error, and gives the month as September. The latter is the true date, for Hill died, September 3, 1828.



Writing to the French Association for the Propagation of the Faith, the next year, the bereaved prelate recurs to his departed friend. Here he says:

My diocese has experienced a most painful loss in the person of the Rev. Father Hill, a Dominican and my vicar general, who died at Canton, September 3, 1828. He was the best of my missionaries, the most learned, the most eloquent and the most zealous. He was one of the ablest preachers in the United States. The churches and other places in which he preached, were always crowded with listeners; and in every part of the diocese the greater number of the converts were made by him. He was indefatigable in his ministrations, and had attended alone six congregations, twenty, thirty and forty miles the one from the other. The excessive heat of last summer (1828) induced an indisposition on his return from a pastoral visit that lasted for two months. The malady made such rapid progress that it brought him to the grave in eight days. This, in a few words, is the content of the letter which he wrote to me a short time before his death: "I have been on a pastoral tour during two months; I traversed several counties; I preached some thirty times in churches, in Protestant temples, in court-houses, and in the open air. I baptized a number of converts and many children; I blessed several marriages and rehabilitated some others; I prepared some Protestants to make their abjuration. I was among the Indians on the borders of the lake, and baptized two adults; but the chief, with nearly all the tribe, was absent on the hunt. I intend to return there on the first opportunity, for the poor Indians appear to be well disposed, etc., etc." We celebrated divine service for the repose of his soul in the cathedral, and every one in the congregation spontaneously wore mourning. I read his last letter from the pulpit. Several times, I was obliged to halt in order to give vent to my tears. All those present wept in the same manner.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Annales*, IV, 506-07. This letter is given simply as written in Cincinnati, in 1829; but it evidently belongs to the month of January. John Speakman Hill was of good birth, was brought up in the Church of England, and became a captain in the army. He served in the Low Countries against the French, but was taken prisoner, being confined for some time in the fortress of Verdun. On regaining his liberty, he returned to England. While stationed at Manchester, he met Rev. Rowland Bromhead by

On his return from Europe in the previous spring, Father De Raymaecker had been stationed at Canton to aid Father Hill. Rev. W. R. Tuite was now called from Saint Rose's, Kentucky, and put in charge of that place, while Rev. R. P. Miles was sent from the same institution to Zanesville. Rev. Stephen H. Montgomery joined the clergy at the cathedral. The purpose of this last move seems to have been largely to place Zanesville's former pastor in charge of a Catholic school just erected, or under way, in Cincinnati, and of some seminarians who had accompanied Father De Raymaecker on his return to America. These were John Martin Henni, destined to become Milwaukee's first bishop and archbishop, Martin Kundig and John Baptist Cliteur. They were all nearly ready for ordination. Cliteur had come to America with the express purpose of joining the Order of Saint Dominic, and the other two seem to have thought of following his

whom he was received into the Church. Later, he disposed of his commission, and went to Bornheim,\*Belgium. There his home adjoined the grounds of the Dominican Fathers, with whom he lived on the most intimate terms. There seems to be no foundation for the statement, which we often read, that he was in the battle of Waterloo. He was a married man, but had no children. By mutual agreement he separated from his wife that he might become a priest. An annuity was fixed on her, and she went to live in a convent, while he proceeded to Rome to enter the Order of Saint Dominic for the province lately established in the United States. On October 9, 1819, he took the vows of religion in the church of the Minerva, kneeling on the tomb of Cardinal Philip Thomas Howard. In the Order he took the name of Augustin. He was rapidly raised to the priesthood, and said his first mass on the ensuing Christmas Day. This was largely because he was a man of splendid education, and had long been a student of philosophy and theology. To a thorough knowledge of English and Latin he added a perfect acquaintance with French, acquired during his service on the continent and a residence of some seventeen or more years in Belgium. The most of this outline is taken from transcripts made for the writer by Rev. Bede Jarrett, O.P., from the manuscript of Father Raymond Palmer, O.P. Those desiring further knowledge of this noted orator and missionary (that is, of his life in America) are referred to the *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, VIII, 111 (October 11, 1828), and to these pages, *passim*.

example. Bishop Fenwick, however, did not seek to influence their choice, for the proposed prefecture, even if established, would not exclude other missionaries from the diocese. Thus, as the seminary at Cincinnati was not ready to receive students, the matter ended by the three candidates being sent to Bardstown until they should be prepared for the priesthood. Brother Samuel C. Mazzuchelli, O.P., who was later to deserve well of the Church in the northwest, arrived towards the end of the year, and was placed at Saint Rose's. Meanwhile, alterations were resumed on the old frame church at the side of the cathedral to put it in a condition to begin the work of educating priests at home, than which the bishop felt nothing was more necessary for his diocese. With Father De Raymaecker came also two Colettine Poor Clares; but as they did not remain in Cincinnati, it is probable that they joined their sisters at Pittsburgh.

On being given to understand by Father Rese that it would probably be impossible to have the proposed prefecture apostolic established in Ohio, Bishop Fenwick wrote requesting the appointment of his vicar general as coadjutor for Cincinnati. Doubtless the prelate, sick and worn out by his apostolic labors, thought it wise to secure the nomination of one acquainted with the missions and whom he believed favorable to his views and the Order that had done so much for the Church under his charge. Father Rese, however, opposed this plan, and urged Bishop Fenwick to propose in his stead either Rev. William V. Harold or Rev. John A. Ryan, two Dominicans then at Philadelphia. Now, therefore, the holy man petitioned that one of these friars, Rev. Francis P. Kenrick or Rev. Charles

B. Maguire, O.S.F., of Pittsburgh, might be associated with him in this capacity.<sup>16</sup>

The years 1827 and 1828 appear to have been marked by Catholic immigration into Ohio. The new-comers were principally from Germany, Ireland and France, with a few from Switzerland. This mixture of races quite naturally caused Bishop Fenwick some anxiety, and induced him to turn his efforts to obtain missionaries who could speak the language of the new arrivals. It had its part in sending Father Tuite to Canton; for many French had begun to settle in that part of the state, and Tuite, because of his long residence in Belgium, spoke French almost as well as his mother-tongue. De Raymaecker devoted his attention principally to the Germans.

The same situation, together with the epidemic of fever of which we have spoken, and the absence of some of his priests, continued to render it impossible for the zealous prelate to pay Michigan and the northwest the visit towards which he had looked with expectant anxiety. So did it make him the more anxious to see Detroit blessed with the residence of its own bishop. Doubtless the news that the diocese for which he had prayed so long and so ardently, had been erected at last caused his pious soul to overflow with joy. This word

<sup>16</sup> Bishop Fenwick to the prefect of the Propaganda, December 15, 1827, and same to same in a letter without date, but evidently belonging to 1828 (photostat copies from the Propaganda Archives); Rese to Fenwick, Rome, June 30, 1827 (Notre Dame Archives). There are several of Father Rese's letters in these archives to the bishop from Rome and France that show how the vicar general urged that Rome should be asked for the appointment of Harold or Ryan as coadjutor for Cincinnati. Fenwick's undated letter, which was likely sent to Rese himself, but did not reach him until after he had left the Eternal City, names Rev. *William Ryan* as his choice. This leaves a doubt as to whether the prelate wanted Ryan or Harold, or whether he intended to mention both of them.



came in the first half of 1827.<sup>17</sup> But he waited in vain through the rest of that year and all 1828, expecting to hear at any time the name of the new member of the American hierarchy, and hoping no doubt that the zealous missionary, Rev. Gabriel Richard, had finally received the reward of his merit.

Rev. Stephen T. Badin, after an absence of more than nine years abroad, now returned to America, reaching New York in the summer of 1828. In announcing his arrival, Bishop Fenwick writes: "I am filled with gratitude towards that venerable friend for the services which he rendered my diocese during his sojourn in Europe."<sup>18</sup> The bishop expected that missionary to offer himself for the Church in the north, and we shall soon find him laboring among the Indians in Michigan at a time when his aid was sorely needed. Indeed, well might Bishop Fenwick thus declare his debt of gratitude to Kentucky's erstwhile missionary; Ohio's Church had no more sympathetic, faithful or tireless friend than was Father Badin during the last years of his stay in Europe.

Attention has been called to our prelate's charity and goodness of heart. Like Saint Martin, he would readily share his cloak with a beggar. With the increased immigration of Catholics into Ohio, among whom were many poor, came increased calls upon him for help

<sup>17</sup> *The Jus Pontificium de Propaganda Fide*, Rome, 1890, IV, 681-82, shows that Detroit was erected into an episcopal see, March 20, 1827. The *Acta* of the Propaganda for 1833, ff. 86-87, tell us that Father Richard had been selected as the city's first bishop, and that, owing to statements by Father Rese and a Father Martial of Kentucky (both then in Rome), Richard's appointment was set aside, while the bull of erection was not sent to America. Yet Archbishop Maréchal, Bishop Flaget and other prelates had united with Fenwick in requesting the establishment of that bishopric and the nomination of Richard as its ordinary. In 1833 Father Rese was appointed the first chief pastor of this diocese.

<sup>18</sup> See note 14.

which he was unable to refuse. Indeed, the reports of his great kindness, travelling abroad, seem to have caused no little dissatisfaction among his European benefactors, and threatened to lessen their generosity. They declared that their donations were for the Church, not for the poor.<sup>19</sup> But the Christ-like Fenwick, as many saints, no doubt felt that what belonged to the Church, belonged also to God's chosen children. He could not refuse to give where he saw poverty and suffering. He believed that he should never desert those whom God so loves.

Nor can we close this chapter without a reference to the jubilee of the preceding year. Many were the converts made at the time. But its fruits were still visible both in the greater fidelity of Catholics to their religious duties, and in the number of those who continued to enter the Church as a result of the doctrinal sermons preached broadcast on that occasion. The instruction of those seeking light took up much of the good bishop's time. Yet, in spite of this and other manifold labors, he was able to assist his priests far and wide, as well as to give various parts of his diocese the benefits of pastoral visits. To write of these, however, were but to repeat much that has already been told, and to set before the reader pictures of faithful toil like unto those of which future pages will speak.

<sup>19</sup> Rese to Fenwick, Lyons, July 26, 1828 (Notre Dame Archives).

## CHAPTER XX

### BRIGHTER PROSPECTS

OHIO's humble apostle keenly appreciated the truth of the old proverb: "Man proposes, but God disposes." Thus, disappointed though he must have been that Rome had not granted the request for a prefecture apostolic in Ohio, he continued at his apostolic labors with unabated zeal. On February 2, 1829, he ordained Revs. John M. Henni, Martin Kundig and John B. Clieteur.<sup>1</sup> With these new forces and the Dominicans at his disposal, the prospects for religion in Ohio became brighter than they had been since the disappointment occasioned by Cardinal Consalvi's order in the early days of the diocese. The good bishop's joy was enhanced by the receipt of generous donations from the French charitable organization of which we have so often spoken, and from other well-wishers abroad.

A letter written, shortly before, to the Association for the Propagation of the Faith not only reveals a soul filled with gratitude towards his benefactors, but shows the zealous prelate's consolation caused by the brighter outlook for the Church under his care. With the money sent him the year before he has built a brick school facing the cathedral residence, defrayed the travelling expenses of missionaries, bought them clothing, purchased and maintained horses for those set apart to visit local-

<sup>1</sup> REUSS, *Biographical Encyclopedia of the Catholic Hierarchy*, p. 53. The *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, VIII, 198 and 222, shows that these clergymen were ordained (by Bishop Flaget, at Bardstown) subdeacons, November 23, and deacons, December 14, 1828.

ities where there are no resident priests. He also secured some land in Canton, where he hoped soon to open a school, and five acres near Cincinnati on which he expected to build a college. With the money still left him he would keep two missionaries, zealous and good preachers, on the road attending to scattered Catholics and the settlements without pastors, so that they would never be long deprived of the succors of religion. This, as has been stated, was an object ever uppermost in Bishop Fenwick's mind. He would also buy a small piece of ground hard by the Cathedral, and necessary for building the seminary for which he yearned. On this subject the prelate writes:

Without a seminary, I can obtain priests from Europe from time to time; but they will always be too few in number to answer the needs of the diocese. . . . If I have a seminary, I shall not be deprived of such European missionaries; yet I shall be able to form a native clergy brought up according to the habits of the country, accustomed to the rough roads, acquainted with the language, etc. Furthermore, I can start a college, and through it obtain some means to better our lot and to set on foot other necessary or useful institutions. Likewise, I shall acquire an influence in the education and instruction of the youth of this state, which will be of great advantage to religion. In a word, Sirs, with a seminary, I have a most consoling prospect before me. Without a seminary, I see only distress for the future. I am, therefore, fully determined to direct all my efforts to this object, and to make no further delay. I will commence by shortly purchasing the lot of which I have spoken, using for that purpose the money I have left and a part of that which you have had the goodness to assign to me. Then I will give my attention to building the necessary structures. I can obtain a few young Europeans and Americans who have made their humanities, so that by the time the edifice is completed, or even before, I shall have seven or eight seminarians. These I will employ, at first, in



teaching the elements of Latin to some boys fourteen or fifteen years of age. I have every reason to hope that, in this way, the project will succeed. But I shudder when I think of the expense. . . .<sup>2</sup>

About this time, the prelate's heart was further rejoiced by the arrival of two other young men in orders. So he tells his benefactors that he has three deacons and two subdeacons preparing for the ministry on the missions. Religion, he continues, is making extraordinary strides in the diocese. Its progress would be still greater if he had more priests. Sectarian ministers are wrought up to a high pitch, and have begun to attack the Church in their public prints. Had he the means, he would like to start a paper to answer them. A little later, February 17, 1829, Father Clicteur, now the Bishop's secretary, writes to the same society, lays much stress on the increase of the faithful through conversions and immigration, and pays Father Miles a tribute for his splendid work in and around Zanesville.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, this parish had grown to such an extent that it became necessary to call Father Samuel L. Montgomery from Kentucky. He was stationed at Saint Joseph's and assisted on the missions far and wide. From Michigan, however, came word of troubles caused by a French Canadian by the name of Fauvel. This young man had studied in a seminary in his native land, had been to Rome, and had received minor orders. In the northwest he had ingratiated himself into the good-will

<sup>2</sup> *Annales*, IV, 502 ff. In the *Annales* this letter is dated: "Cincinnati . . . 1829." But the fact that Henni, Kundig and Clicteur were not yet ordained shows that it was written in January.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 508 ff.—Indeed, according to this letter, Father Miles had begun to equal the bishop and Hill in making converts. Fathers Tuite and De Raymaecker also came in for much praise for their work in Canton and its vicinity.

of Father Richard, by whom he was permitted to open a Catholic school at Green Bay, Wisconsin. Here the wretched man pretended to perform the functions of a priest, practised deceit on the simple Indians, and otherwise disturbed the faithful Catholics. Although excommunicated by the bishop, he continued in his fraudulent life.<sup>4</sup>

Bishop Fenwick wished to visit the northwest at once to put an end to this evil, but was detained at Cincinnati by the seminary which he had determined to open at the earliest possible moment. This ceremony took place, May 11, 1829, the bishop reading the regulations and preaching to the students. Mass and the *Veni Creator* were sung to invoke the blessing of God upon the pious enterprise. The institution was placed under the name and protection of Saint Francis Xavier. In this connection, it may be noticed that the names given by our prelate to his seminary and churches show his predilection for saints noted for their apostolic labors. The seminary commenced its work with ten students, four in theology and six in the humanities.<sup>5</sup>

Writing of the event, Father Cliteur says: "If one may judge from the beginnings, this establishment promises happy results. The regulations, which are already in full vigor, are patterned after those of the best seminaries in Europe; the only differences are those demanded by the circumstances and customs of the country. Some missionaries from other places who have just passed this way, expressed their astonishment at the progress made in so short a time." From the same letter we learn that the holy prelate, in the grati-

<sup>4</sup> Fenwick to the prefect of the Propaganda, April 8, 1829 (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. X).

<sup>5</sup> Father Cliteur to the *Annales*, June 28, 1829 *Annales*, IV, 514 ff.).

tude of his heart, made it a rule of his seminary that its inmates should offer prayers in common every day for the benefactors of the diocese. Besides this, they were required to say the following prayer for the members of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith:

Let us pray for those associated in Europe for the propagation of the faith.

O Lord, Thou who, where there are two or three gathered together in Thy name, art in the midst of them, be also, we beseech Thee, with all those who, in Europe, compose the Association for the Propagation of Thy faith; grant that their efforts may bear abundant fruit, and that faith in Thee may increase everywhere; and bestow upon those so associated, in reward for their generosity and zeal, happiness temporal as well as eternal.

Saint Francis Xavier, pray for them.<sup>6</sup>

Rev. Stephen Montgomery, a talented Dominican, was appointed the seminary's first president. With him were associated Revs. J. B. Clicteur and Martin Kundig. Brothers James Vincent Bullock, an excellent classical scholar and linguist, Charles Dominic Bowling and James Hyacinth Clarkson were also brought from Saint Rose's, although they had not yet completed their course of theology. Brother Samuel C. Mazzuchelli was sent to Saint Joseph's to learn English in preparation for the missions in the northwest, while Rev. J. M. Henni seems to have become a travelling missionary among the Germans, but made his home at the cathedral.

<sup>6</sup> Oremus pro Associatis in Europa ad Propagationem fidei.

O Domine, qui ubi sunt duo vel tres congregati in nomine tuo, ibi es in medio eorum, adsis quoque, precamur, omnibus qui in Europa componunt Associationes [m?] pro Propagatione tuae fidei; et fac ut conamina eorum plenum sortiantur effectum, et ut tua fides ubique crescat; ac eis ipsis Associatis, in praeium suae munificentiae et zeli, felicitatem tribue temporalem et aeternam.

Sancte Franciscæ Xaveri,

Ora pro eis.

To this prayer were added an Our Father and a Hail Mary.

No previous ordinary in the United States seems to have taken so lively an interest in the spiritual welfare of the northwest country as Bishop Fenwick. Accordingly, on the day after the opening of his seminary, he started for Michigan accompanied by Father J. I. Mullan. But an hour before his departure on the long journey, the prelate dispatched a letter to the Propaganda, in which he again lays before that august body the prospects and needs of his own diocese, and begs the appointment of a bishop for the newly established see of Detroit. Ohio alone, he says, suffices to keep him busy from morning until night looking after merely the most imperative matters. Immigration, especially from Ireland, Germany and France, is daily on the increase. Conversions are many; the number would be doubled, had he double the number of priests. Michigan and the northwest offer a good field for the efforts of a zealous bishop. An ordinary there would not have to contend with such trying difficulties as he had had to face in the early days of his episcopate; for the disposition of the people towards Catholicity is a hundred times better than was that in Ohio and Cincinnati at the time of the erection of that see. The Propaganda, therefore, should lose no time in providing an ecclesiastical superior for those provinces. The Church is suffering greatly there from the want of such a head and through the proselytism of the sects.<sup>7</sup>

Possibly in part because Father Richard had suffered himself to be deceived by Fauvel, and partly because it was thought that it would be useless longer to seek the appointment of that zealous missionary, Bishop Fen-

<sup>7</sup> *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, VIII, 382; Fenwick to the prefect of the Propaganda, May 12, 1829 (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. X).



wick now proposed other candidates for the see of Detroit.<sup>8</sup> First on the new list was Father John B. Acquaroni, C.M., who had been for some years on the missions of Louisiana, but was then in Italy. Rev. G. I. Chabrat was second, while Rev. Simon G. Bruté, S.S., came third. In case the sacred congregation should not see fit to nominate one of these three men to the new diocese, the overburdened prelate urged the transfer of the Right Rev. Michael Portier from the vicariate of Alabama and the Floridas to Detroit, where he would find a field much more worthy of his zeal. The letter is a pretty and earnest appeal to be relieved of a part of his great burden, as well as to have his conscience set at rest and the interests of religion more effectually advanced.

Bishop Fenwick's strength of will and the heroism of his journey to the northwest at this time are shown by the fact that he was then in a very enfeebled state of health. Indeed, there were those who feared that he would not return alive. The *United States Catholic Miscellany*, commenting on a report sent it by a correspondent, says:

. . . We have frequently heard of the excellent private and public qualifications of the amiable and zealous Bishop of Cincinnati; his labours have been astonishing, and though we were, as we thought, fully informed of the extent of his success, yet we avow we were not aware until lately of the great benefits conferred on the American Church through the instrumentality of the *Right Rev. Edward Fenwick*. We rejoice at the account of his successful progress, but we are indeed afflicted at the idea that there should exist any ground for apprehending his loss. We

<sup>8</sup> In the letter referred to in note 4 the bishop insinuates rather clearly that the Fauvel incident had somewhat shaken his confidence in Father Richard's judgment.

trust that the expressions of our correspondent are but those of tender and apprehensive affection.<sup>9</sup>

Having appointed Father Stephen H. Montgomery temporary vicar general, possibly a measure of precaution on account of his health, Bishop Fenwick left Cincinnati, May 12, 1829. His original intention had been to halt and perform ministerial duties at several places in Ohio that lay along his path. But his zeal to remedy the abuses that had crept in at Green Bay, caused him to proceed to that distant mission with as little delay as possible. Bishop Fenwick arrived at Green Bay, May 27, and began his visitation on the following morning, Ascension Day, with mass and a sermon. There, as everywhere, his amiable piety and conciliatory disposition won the hearts of the disaffected when severer measures might have failed.<sup>10</sup> Though not stated in the account of the visit, we fancy that the bishop must have confirmed while at Green Bay. If he did, it was the first time that this sacrament was administered in the present state of Wisconsin.

On leaving Cincinnati, Bishop Fenwick appears to have intended to journey as far as Prairie du Chien. But he changed his mind, probably because of his health, pressing duties at home and his desire to attend a council to be held at Baltimore in October. He therefore retraced his steps to Mackinac and Arbre Croche. At these places he confirmed both whites and Indians. This was certainly the first time the sacrament was ever administered within the limits of the present diocese of Grand Rapids, and probably the first time within those

<sup>9</sup> See note 7.

<sup>10</sup> *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, VIII, 382, and IX, 62.

of Marquette.<sup>11</sup> Likely for the reasons given, the holy prelate did not visit the northern peninsula of Michigan. Returning from Mackinac to Detroit, he proceeded to devote his attention to the various churches and missions in the southeastern part of the state.

Bishop Fenwick's heart was touched by the love and affection shown him by these simple children of the forest all along his route. He was deeply affected by the profound piety of many. But he appears to have been especially pleased with the Indian mission at Arbre Croche. Here, at the solicitation of the Indians, he placed Rev. P. J. Dejean as the first resident pastor. Doubtless the bishop himself would have been happy to remain in the midst of these guileless, responsive souls. A Catholic school was commenced, the girls being taught by a Miss Baille and a Miss Williams, while the boys were placed, either then or later, under the tutorship of one Joseph l'Etourneau.

On his homeward journey our prelate visited various places in Ohio to give the faithful spiritual succor. At Port Clinton a subscription was opened to build a church on a lot donated by a Presbyterian, while at Tiffin ground was secured for the same purpose.<sup>12</sup> It was in the first half of August that Bishop Fenwick reached Cincinnati. It was likely on his arrival at home that the prelate received a letter from Father Reese written at Vienna, December 10, 1828, from which we

<sup>11</sup> *The Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, XXXVIII, 510, tell us that confirmation was given for the first time, and by Fenwick, in the diocese of Grand Rapids in 1827. But as we have not been able to find any record of his being in Michigan at that time, we fancy that 1827 is a typographical error for 1829.

<sup>12</sup> The account of this journey is taken from the *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, IX, 62-63. For the school at Arbre Croche see Verwyst's *Life of Bishop Baraga*, pp. 61-63.

give an extract that must have brought joy to his heart and courage to his soul.

My very dear Bishop [writes that missionary].—You will doubtless be surprised to see that I am still at Vienna; but I have acted in Europe only according to your advice. You told me, in one of your last letters, to pass through Germany, if I thought it would not take too much time, and felt sure of meeting with good success there. I therefore followed your advice, although I could not, at that time, foresee what success I should have, or tell precisely how long it would take me. However, I have now the happiness to announce to you that God has been good to us and blessed our enterprise; and that the well-being of our diocese and mission, together with that of many others, is, so to say, assured for the future. The establishment of a society for the propagation of the faith has been decreed by their Majesties, the Emperor of Austria for all his monarchy, and the King of Bavaria for all his kingdom. I can attribute this good fortune only to the special mercy of divine providence and to your holy prayers, along with those of many pious persons in Vienna. I can never sufficiently thank the Lord for the many favors He has showered upon me through all my travels. In fact, from the time of my departure from Cincinnati to the present moment, God has signally blessed my every step with good. On finishing my business at Munich, I set out for Vienna, and though I have been here for three months, it was only the day before yesterday that the imperial decree was made known to me.<sup>13</sup>

This was the origin of the well-known Leopoldine Society which was destined to be of great assistance not only to Bishop Fenwick during the short span of life still left to him, but to our struggling American Church. The association was modeled on the French society of which we have so often spoken, and of which it was soon to become a rival in its efforts for the spread of Catholic truth in the United States. Indeed, it seems quite cer-

<sup>13</sup> Archives of Notre Dame University.



tain that the generous assistance given Bishop Fenwick by the French league of charity was father to the efforts that led to the successful launching of the Leopoldine Society which was founded expressly for the aid of the Catholic missions in America.

As early as February 18, 1829, Bishop Fenwick had written to the Most Rev. James Whitfield warmly sanctioning the convocation of a provincial council at Baltimore in October, and promising to attend.<sup>14</sup> Doubtless it was a source of no little delight to his honest soul to feel that he would have the pleasure of encouraging the assembled hierarchy with the news of the successful establishment, by his emissary abroad, of a new means of support for their needy missions; for his broad charity embraced the welfare of the entire American Church. His letter to the archbishop shows him to have been keenly interested in all matters that made for the good of religion; but he especially advocated the adoption of rules and measures that would bring about uniformity of practice and discipline in all the dioceses, and tend to unite the various bishops, as well as the clergy, in more intimate bonds of unity, harmony and friendship.

The good prelate's trials, however, were not at an end. So he writes from Cincinnati, September 3, 1829, to his friend, Abbé Rigagnon of Bordeaux:

I have the painful duty of announcing to you that Father Cliteur, my secretary, is very ill. We have no hopes of his recovery. His death will be a great loss for me. Two other of my missionaries have left me, while a third has asked for his *exeat*. So, my dear friend, as you may conceive, I am quite distressed. Without that confidence which I place in God and His goodness,

<sup>14</sup> Baltimore Archives, Case 23, H 5.

I should certainly be overcome. *Sed, in te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in aeternum* [But, in Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be confounded]. Pray for me, my friend, that the good Lord may continue to sustain me as He has done up to the present. My health is tolerably good, and my spirits do not fail me. If Father Rese were returned, I should be consoled.<sup>15</sup>

From the same letter we learn that Bishop Fenwick brought with him two Indian youths from Mackinac and placed them in his seminary. His intention was, when they should be sufficiently advanced, to send them to the College of the Propaganda, that they might finish their ecclesiastical education in the Capital of Christendom, and on their return to America labor among their own people. As far as we have been able to learn, this was the first attempt on the part of our American hierarchy to enroll the aborigines among their clergy; and it speaks much in praise of the zeal of Cincinnati's first ordinary. From Baltimore he wrote again, October 16, 1829, to the grand almoner of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith, telling of the happiness afforded him by his ministrations among the Ottawas at Arbre Croche. The simple faith and piety of these Indians were as balm to his soul. Father Dejean's efforts for the Catholic education of their youth promised much good. The kind-hearted prelate would be deeply grateful if the French charitable organization could extend their helpful hand to Father Richard whom he styles "the most venerable and the

<sup>15</sup> *Annales*, IV, 521-23.—From the *Catholic Press*, October 31, 1829, we learn that Father Cliteur died on September 18, that year. The names of the two priests who had left the bishop, we have not been able to ascertain. They did not belong to his Order. In those days the missionaries were not so strongly bound to the dioceses as are the clergy of today. They came and went rather freely. We are of the opinion that Father Dejean was the one asking for an *exeat*. That zealous priest's health had failed, and family affairs made him anxious to return to France.

most deserving of the missionaries" in the northwest.<sup>16</sup> In the course of the same letter he takes occasion to say:

In the midst of trials inseparable from a ministry so laborious as ours, Your Eminence, it is a source of no little solace to my heart to see the united efforts of so many pious persons contesting, enviously as it were, the honor of sharing in some manner the labors of my missionaries. May heaven deign to hear my prayer that, if we are so fortunate as to obtain any merits, they may participate in them according to the measure due their charity. What would I not do, furthermore, to make them partakers in the abundant consolations with which, through the mercy of God, our toils are accompanied!

On the seventh day of November, 1791, Bishop Carroll opened the first ecclesiastical synod ever convoked in the United States. Besides the prelate himself and his four vicars general, there were present sixteen priests gathered from various parts of the extensive diocese. The event marked a new era in the history of our Church. Laws and regulations for the good of religion were enacted and put into execution. Again, in November, 1810, after the consecration of Doctors Cheverus, Egan and Flaget, respectively the bishops of Boston, Philadelphia and Bardstown, the archbishop, his coadjutor (the Right Rev. Leonard Neale), and the new suffragans held a meeting at which several articles of ecclesiastical discipline were adopted. These, together with the synod of 1791, remained in force for the next twenty years constituting the disciplinary statutes of the Church in the United States; for, owing to obstacles and delays, not until 1829 was another such an assembly convened in our proto-cathedral.

Thus the first provincial council held in the United States was that opened by Archbishop Whitfield at

<sup>16</sup> *Annales*, IV, 522 ff.

Baltimore, October 1, 1829. Besides the metropolitan, there were present the bishops of Boston, Charleston, Cincinnati, Bardstown and Saint Louis. The coadjutor of Bardstown remained at home; Doctor Portier of Mobile was in Europe; Bishop Dubois of New York had sailed for Rome shortly before the meeting, but was represented by his vicar general, Very Rev. John Power; and Very Rev. William Matthews, then in charge of the diocese of Philadelphia by apostolic appointment, sat in the deliberative body to take the place of the bishop of that see.<sup>17</sup> Eleven other priests, either as heads of religious orders or as theologians, rounded out the complement of the council. Still others were present to aid in carrying out the rubrics incident to the ceremonies on such occasions. All in all, it was the largest and most august ecclesiastical assemblage that had ever met in the United States. Interest in the solemnity was heightened by the bestowal of the pallium on Archbishop Whitfield. This took place on Sunday, October 4, and was one of the most imposing Catholic ceremonials that had been witnessed in the country up to that time.

That these solemn events made a strong appeal to the pious soul of Cincinnati's first ordinary there can be no doubt. They showed him the progress of the Church in his native land which he had long yearned to see gathered under the banner of Christ. The eight and thirty decrees passed by the council for the good of religion, however, we fancy, appealed to him still more strongly. Another source of keen delight to him and his cousin, the Right Rev. Benedict J. Fenwick of Boston, the only members of the hierarchy at that time who were native

<sup>17</sup> Bishop Conwell of Philadelphia, who had been abroad, returned before the close of the council, but took no part in its deliberations.



Americans, was the visit paid by the assembled bishops to Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the last surviving signer of the declaration of independence.<sup>18</sup>

Almost from the time of his consecration Bishop Fenwick had turned his thought to obtaining the services of the Daughters of Mother Seton for his diocese. Previous efforts, owing to poverty, had failed. But his desire was now to be realized. During the council he sent Rev. J. I. Mullon, whom he appears to have brought east with him for that purpose, back to Cincinnati with the little band of sisters that he had secured from the mother-house at Emmitsburg. On October 19, he wrote from Baltimore to Rev. John McElroy, S.J., at Frederick, Maryland:

Your favor of 15th is just handed to me. I am glad to hear of the happy departure of my apostolic Sisters with good Mr. Mullon. I hope God will protect and prosper them. I thank you cordially for your kind assistance to them and myself. Our Council closed yesterday after fifteen days' steady session. Our meeting and proceedings throughout were cordial, harmonious and consoling to all and each of us. Much good, we trust, will be effected, many salutary regulations adopted, abuses corrected, and uniformity adopted. We are to go to-morrow to see and dine with the venerable Mr. Carroll. . . .<sup>19</sup>

Bishop Fenwick had now to experience a conflict between the zeal which urged his immediate return to Cincinnati, and the affection which struggled to make him spend a little time with his relatives and old friends. Charity, he believed, demanded that he make some concession to the claims of those thus closely bound to him,

<sup>18</sup> Those desirous of fuller information on this council are referred to the *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, IX, *passim*, and to Shea's *History of the Church*, III, 407 ff.

<sup>19</sup> Archives of the Maryland-New York Province of the Jesuit Fathers, McElroy Papers, Case 12 B.

and whom he perhaps felt that he should not be privileged to see again.<sup>20</sup> But we soon find the apostolic prelate on his westward journey, the time of which was probably spent, in large part, in prayer for the success of his latest endeavor in the causes of Catholic education and the orphan—purposes for which he had sought and obtained the Daughters of Mother Seton. May not one of his accidental joys in heaven come from the fact that he brought into his diocese a religious body of women that has done so much for religion and charity in that part of the Lord's vineyard over which he once presided? As soon as he crossed the Ohio River into his own diocese, the untiring bishop resumed his apostolic ministrations. At Saint Joseph's, November 29, he conferred the order of deaconship on Brother Charles Mazzuchelli. It was on the seventh day of December that he reached Cincinnati, "to receive the thousand welcomes of an affectionate and grateful flock." To his no little delight, the bishop found that Mother Seton's Daughters had already entered upon their work in the causes of charity and Catholic education.<sup>21</sup> He now felt that his efforts in behalf of God's little ones were at last crowned with success. Nor was he deceived.

<sup>20</sup> Fenwick to McElroy, October 30, 1829. See preceding note.

<sup>21</sup> *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, IX, 214-15.

## CHAPTER XXI

### ZEAL REWARDED

ALTHOUGH Father Rese's endeavors abroad as Bishop Fenwick's emissary had resulted in many blessings to the diocese, the prelate was anxious for his return. On December 17, 1829, that missionary reached Cincinnati, after an absence of nearly three years. He was accompanied by a young clergyman of promise who spoke both German and French. They were soon followed by a German in deacon's orders. It would be difficult to say which was the greater, Bishop Fenwick's joy at this new force of laborers, or Father Rese's delight at the progress religion had made during his absence. On his return, the vicar general found fifteen students in the little seminary which had been started only a few months before. Non-Catholics, anxious for the erection of Catholic churches in various places of Ohio, were offering land for that purpose; conversions were frequent, at least one hundred and fifty having been received into the Church in Cincinnati within the last two years, while hardly a day passed in which several persons did not present themselves to the "good bishop to be instructed." Only more means and more missionaries, Rese wrote, were needed "to see again the glorious days of Saint Francis Xavier in Ohio and Michigan."<sup>1</sup> Bishop Fenwick now received a full account of the aim and purpose of the newly established Leopoldine Society. Accordingly, he wrote to Austria's emperor, Francis I:

<sup>1</sup> Rese, Cincinnati, January 15, 1830, to a friend in Europe (*Annales*, IV, 526 ff.); Fenwick, Cincinnati, February 25, 1830, to Abbé Rigagnon, France (*ibid.*, IV, 532-34).

Sir:

May it please Your Highness to accept the respectful homage of one penetrated with sentiments of gratitude inspired by the good-will and zeal which Your Imperial Majesty has shown for the Catholic religion. We feel ourself irresistably urged to make known to Your Royal Highness the consolation which the Bishops and Superiors of the missions in America derive from the recent news, that a society has been founded in the States under Your Imperial Majesty for the aid of the Catholic missions in America. We have also the pleasure of announcing the safe return of our friend and vicar general, Rev. Frederic Rese, whose apostolic labors and unwearied zeal are beyond all praise. He brings us most gratifying accounts of the good-will with which he was received and honored by devout and distinguished persons in your Imperial City; but especially of the encouraging kindness shown him by Your Royal Highness who was pleased to lend your protection to the pious work of supplying the urgent needs of our poor missions and our new dioceses. We venture, therefore, to flatter ourself that the worthy inheritor of the virtues of the saintly Leopold and the great Maria Theresa will continue to support us in our feeble efforts to spread the Catholic Religion through this vast country, destitute of all resources, whether spiritual or temporal—particularly among the Indian tribes that constitute an important part of our diocese. We shall not fail daily to offer up our prayers and our heartiest wishes to the Lord of Hosts, to the King of Heaven, that He may pour forth His choicest blessings upon Your Imperial Majesty, upon your illustrious family, and upon the entire Kingdom. May it please Your Highness graciously to accept this expression of our sincere gratitude and humble respect, with which we have the honor to sign Ourself

Your Imperial Majesty's

most grateful, obedient and devoted servant,

EDWARD FENWICK,

*Bishop of Cincinnati and Administrator  
Apostolic of Michigan and the Northwest.*

Cincinnati, Ohio,

15 January, 1830.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Berichte der Leopoldinen-Stiftung im Kaiserthume Oesterreich*, No 1,



The incipient seminary, into which the old frame church had been hastily converted to meet the growing needs of the diocese, had already become too small. Besides, it was hardly fit for habitation; nor did it harmonize with the architecture of the cathedral. Accordingly, now that he had some money on hand, through the munificence of the French Association for the Propagation of the Faith, and felt assured of further aid not only from that source, but from the newly established Leopoldine Society, Bishop Fenwick determined to begin work on a larger structure that would serve for both college and seminary.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, he had finally succeeded in securing some Dominican Sisters from Kentucky. In a letter to Abbé Rigagnon, dated February 25, 1830, he writes:

5-6.—In reply to his letter Bishop Fenwick received the following acknowledgement:

“Most worthy Bishop:—

“The Austrian Consul General at New York forwarded to me the letter which Your Lordship wrote to my Royal Master, the Emperor, under the date of 15 January, this year. I did not delay to give the same to His Majesty, who was greatly pleased with the sentiments expressed therein, and commissioned me to reply to Your Lordship.

“The Emperor, strongly and steadfastly devoted to our holy Religion, feels a keen sense of joy at the account that the truth is making such rapid strides in the vast country of North America. Convinced of the irresistible power which Catholic teaching must exercise over simple and pure hearts and minds, when its truths are expounded by truly apostolic missionaries, His Imperial Majesty entertains the most favorable hopes for the great progress which our holy Religion must make in the United States and among the Indian tribes.

“The Emperor commissions me to tell Your Lordship that he cheerfully permits his people to contribute towards the support of the Catholic Church in America, in accordance with the plans proposed by your worthy Vicar General, Rev. Frederic Rese.

“While acquitting myself to Your Lordship of the commission placed on me by my Royal Master, I feel happy in being his agent, and beg you to accept the assurance of the sentiments of respect and esteem with which I remain

“Your Lordship’s

“most humble and obedient Servant,

“Prince von Metternich.”

“Vienna, 27 April, 1830.” (*Ibid.*, 7.)

<sup>3</sup> Letter of Father Rese, as in note 1.

I have lately brought four Sisters of Charity from Baltimore. Their establishment, I hope, will prosper. They have already one hundred and six children in the school, and five orphans in the asylum. I have placed some Sisters of the Order of Saint Dominic at Somerset, one hundred and fifty miles from this place. They have opened a school. I shall put others at Zanesville and Canton, where there is a great deal of good to be done. I have no doubt at all of their success. If possible, I must build four churches this year—one at Hamilton, twenty-five miles from here; the second at Urbana; a third at Tiffin; the fourth at Clinton, on the shores of Lake Erie. Ground for all these fanes is offered to me by Protestants. In this way, I shall have churches scattered here and there from Cincinnati to Lake Erie. We are likewise beginning, at this very moment, to procure materials for the construction of our college which will be one hundred and thirty feet long by fifty wide. Here then, my friend, is something that will keep me busy, night and day, for the rest of my life—if, indeed, God leaves me here below long enough to execute all these designs; for *homo proponit, Deus disponit, etc.* [Man proposes, but God disposes]. I wish to live only for Him and the salvation of souls. I must also visit my good Indians at Mackinac, Arbore Croche and Green Bay. Father Rese will accompany me on this journey. He will write you an account of the tour, if I fail to do so; and I feel sure that the report he sends you will be very consoling and very interesting. . . .<sup>4</sup>

Prior to this, Bishop Fenwick had recalled Father Muños to Cincinnati, and sent Rev. Thomas H. Martin to Saint Rose's to govern that institution until the seminary should be sufficiently advanced to dispense with the services of Father S. H. Montgomery, under whose charge it had been decided to place the priory in Kentucky. While a saintly man and a most exemplary religious, as well as a zealous and successful missionary and a theologian of note, Father Muños was not practical. This, together with his rigid Spanish training

<sup>4</sup> See note 1.

and temperament, unsuited him to rule over a community in the United States composed principally of Americans. His extraordinary personal severity had its part in causing him to be selected for the position of prior in Kentucky, where Jansenistic ideas were still somewhat prevalent; but it was soon discovered that he was not the right man for the place. The result was the change of which we have spoken.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps, however, no one welcomed his recall to Cincinnati with greater joy than Father Muños himself; for his humility caused him to shun posts of honor, while his tender conscience led him to seek to avoid a position which involved so great a responsibility as that of superior over a religious community.

Bishop Fenwick did not suffer the cares incumbent on him as commissary of the Dominican Master general to dull his interest in his other charges, to lessen his apostolic labors in Ohio, or to retard work on the new seminary and college. The corner-stone of this institution, the opening of which may be said to mark a new era in the history of Ohio's Church, was laid May 14, 1830. But our prelate was so occupied with pastoral duties that he could not be present in the episcopal city for even so significant an event as this. Accordingly, Rev. J. I. Mullan, doubtless as a token of regard for his faithful services, was awarded the honor of presiding at this function. The bishop had promised to pay another visit to Michigan and the northwest that year; but the press of calls in Ohio, together with an occurrence of which we have now to speak, made it neces-

<sup>5</sup> An old and incomplete record of Saint Rose's Priory. Tradition tells us that Father Muños was given to extraordinary mortification.

sary, though much against his will, to delegate his vicar general, Rev. F. Rese, to perform this duty.<sup>6</sup>

At the request of the provincial council of Baltimore, October, 1829, Rome appointed Rev. Francis P. Kenrick of Kentucky coadjutor and administrator apostolic of the diocese of Philadelphia. The bulls of appointment were received by Father Kenrick in the spring of 1830, and June 6 was set as the time for the consecration. The bishop elect at once invited his friend, Doctor Fenwick, to be present for the occasion.<sup>7</sup> Coming as it did at a time that interfered with his intended visit to the northwest, Cincinnati's zealous ordinary must have been not a little embarrassed. Yet he could not decline such a request from one whom he held in the highest esteem. Five bishops, besides Doctor Kenrick himself, were present at the event, the greatest number of prelates that had ever come together west of the Alleghany Mountains.

Bishop England of Charleston was the orator of the day. Quite naturally our prelate was anxious that the community which he had established, and the congregation over which he had once presided, should also hear the distinguished speaker. Doubtless, therefore, it was at Bishop Fenwick's request that Charleston's eloquent ordinary preached in the Church of Saint Rose two days after the consecration of Philadelphia's coadjutor. Bishop Fenwick likewise took advantage of his stay in Kentucky to ordain four young Dominicans to the priesthood. This was on June 13th, the Sunday in the

<sup>6</sup> A document found in the corner-stone of the Athenaeum when torn down, August, 1891 (Archives of Saint Xavier's College, Cincinnati); a letter of Fenwick to Father Richard, undated, but evidently belonging to early 1830 (Archives of Notre Dame University).

<sup>7</sup> Rev. F. P. Kenrick to Bishop Fenwick, Bardstown, May 4, 1830 (Archives of Notre Dame University).



octave of the feast of Corpus Christi. The new priests were Revs. Charles P. Montgomery, afterwards preconised the first bishop of Monterey, California, Joseph T. Jarboe, Charles D. Bowling and James V. Bullock, all of whom were afterwards to see service in Ohio. On the same date the habit of Saint Dominic was given to several postulants. Among these were Brother Thomas L. Grace, later bishop of Saint Paul, and two half-breed Ottawa Indians. In this connection, it is worthy of note that this is the earliest record that we have been able to discover of an attempt on the part of any religious order in the United States to enroll Indians among its priesthood. The undertaking, no doubt, was to a great extent the initiative of Cincinnati's apostolic ordinary.<sup>8</sup>

Bishop Fenwick was accompanied home by Charleston's noted prelate. At the episcopal residence they found Bishop Conwell with his newly consecrated coadjutor, Doctor Kenrick. Cincinnati, once so bigoted, must have been set agog by the presence of four of the Catholic hierarchy. But, largely through the zeal, candor and conciliatory disposition of the city's ordinary, few traces of the former prejudice and open antagonism now remained. The distinguished visitors were not only delighted at this change of sentiment, but surprised at the rapid progress of the Church. Doctor England's fame had preceded him, arousing an earnest expectation and desire on the part of the people to hear him. Nor was Bishop Fenwick slow to avail himself of so golden an opportunity of good for religion in his episcopal city. Charleston's gifted prelate was pressed into service for a sermon on June 20, 1830, the day

<sup>8</sup> *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, X, 22-23; record of Saint Rose's, as in note 5.

after his arrival. The cathedral was jammed; the impression created immense. Although anxious to continue his journey, Bishop England was now constrained to yield to the earnest solicitation of Ohio's apostle and spend a week in Cincinnati to deliver a course of lectures. Crowds of every religious belief flocked to hear the eminent orator. The days of Father Hill's eloquent discourses were repeated, with the result that the anti-Catholic barriers were further demolished, and the cause of the Church not a little benefited.<sup>9</sup>

Bishop Fenwick's paternal heart, as has been stated, throbbed with affection for the simple Indians under his charge. It was therefore a source of keen delight to him that the Rev. Stephen T. Badin, on his return to America in 1828, began to labor on the missions of Michigan. But in the following year that veteran missionary went back to the field of his early toils, Kentucky. The bishop now sent Rev. Samuel M. Smith, a converted Quaker from Pennsylvania who had been ordained by Bishop Flaget early in 1828, to take charge of Monroe, or Raisin River. About the same time, the summer of 1829, Rev. Patrick O'Kelly, who also appears to have come from the diocese of Bardstown, was placed at Detroit to help Father Richard oppressed by the double burden of debt and labor. The Ottawas at Arbre Croche, under the care of Father Dejean, were not only happy, but making rapid progress in religion and civilization. The mixed tribes around Mackinac, the Chippewas of Sault Sainte Marie, the Pottawatomies on the Saint Joseph's River, and the Menominees of Green Bay were petitioning for resident priests. The Sacs, Foxes and other remnants of tribes in south-

<sup>9</sup> *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, X, 29.

western Wisconsin were either making similar appeals, or gave promise of an abundant spiritual harvest, if only missionaries could be sent among them. The French Canadians in these places were perhaps not less anxious than their red brethren to have pastors located among them. Rev. F. V. Badin, acting under the inspiration of our prelate, as well as moved by the impulse of his own zeal, continued to visit the remote missions when circumstances permitted. But they were too many, and too far distant the one from the other, for any single missionary properly to attend to, even had he no other charge.<sup>10</sup>

These cries for help, there can be no doubt, worried our prelate's tender conscience, and made him anxious to pay his red flock another pastoral visit. Unable to go himself, he sent Father Rese in his stead. The vicar general left Cincinnati in company with Doctor England whom Bishop Fenwick likely persuaded to visit Detroit. On the journey to the north, however, that distinguished divine changed his mind, left his companions at Columbus, and returned to Charleston by way of Wheeling.<sup>11</sup> Fortunately, Rev. S. T. Badin (for age had not chilled his zeal) again offered his services to Cincinnati's ordinary. He was therefore sent to the northwest with Father Rese. To follow the vicar general through his labors in the north at this time were

<sup>10</sup> Rev. S. M. Smith to Bishop Fenwick, Monroe, September 26, 1829, and April 11 and September 14, 1830 (Archives of Cincinnati); Rese to same, Detroit, July 13, 1830 (Archives of Notre Dame University); Rev. Gabriel Richard to same, Detroit, August 17, 1830 (*ibid.*); the church records of Saint Anne's, Detroit, and Saint Mary's, Monroe; F. V. Badin to Bishop Fenwick, March 8, 1830 (Archives of Notre Dame); letter of same in *Annales*, IV, 534-43; letter of S. T. Badin, Detroit, September 1, 1830 (*Annales*, IV, 546-50).

<sup>11</sup> *Miscellany*, as in note 9; Rese to Fenwick, as in note 10; England to same, Charleston, September 22, 1830 (Archives of Notre Dame University).

but to repeat what has already been said in the description of similar journeys of Bishop Fenwick and Rev. F. V. Badin through Michigan and in eastern Wisconsin. Suffice it then to say that everywhere he met with great encouragement, accomplished much good, and baptized a number of Indians. He was astonished at the simple faith and good disposition shown by the aboriginal Americans. At the station of the Pottawatomies on the upper Saint Joseph's River, the aged chief, Pokagan, was received into the Church, and notified the sectarian missionaries who had intruded themselves into the reservation, that they must leave the place within a month, in order to make room for the black-gown. Father Stephen T. Badin was then appointed pastor of the Pottawatomies, a circumstance that in the designs of providence helped to prepare the way for one of our greatest Catholic educational institutions, Notre Dame University, Indiana.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, Bishop Fenwick, accompanied by Father R. P. Miles, O.P., made his accustomed rounds of apostolic visits in Ohio. As on all such tours, sermons were preached in court-houses, non-Catholic churches, or wherever an audience or a place could be procured. As usual, too, the sermons were followed by conversions.<sup>13</sup> But in the midst of these ministrations the bishop was shocked by the death of one of his most zealous missionaries, Rev. Raphael Muños. Father Muños died in Cincinnati, September 18, 1830, a victim of his charity. He was in the fifty-third year of his age. How this loss was felt by Bishop Fenwick may be seen from the following encomium by a fellow-missionary.

<sup>12</sup> *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, X, 29, 79, 182; letters of Rese, Richard and S. T. Badin, as in note 10.

<sup>13</sup> *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, X, 79, 182.



He had laboured on the Ohio missions for nearly six years, with the zeal of an apostle. His pleasure consisted in explaining the principles of the Catholic faith; and for that end he spared neither time nor pains. Surrounded by children and others destitute of religious instruction, he would spend weeks in the cabins of the interior to remove ignorance and replace it by the light of revealed truth. In the city of Cincinnati, where he chiefly resided, the poor knew him as another good Samaritan, who never passed them by without administering all the relief, which his condition afforded, and their necessities required. The tears of a large and pious assembly, on the day of his interment, proclaimed aloud that the widow had lost a friend; the orphan an advocate; religion one of its fairest ornaments; and the diocese of Cincinnati one of its most useful missionaries. His memory will live in the grateful and pious remembrance of the numerous friends who deplore his loss; while their children shall be taught to unite with them in fervent ejaculation for the repose of his departed soul.<sup>14</sup>

As the reader may imagine, the deaths of such priests as Fathers Hill, Cliteur and Muños were severe blows to Bishop Fenwick in his dearth of missionaries, while the harvest to be gathered was so great and widespread. Yet his extant letters show that, with all the needs facing him, his high ideals of the sacred ministry caused him to exercise the greatest care in admitting clergymen for the diocese and students into the seminary, as well as to keep a watchful eye over them after they had been received.<sup>15</sup> The same letters bear wit-

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.—The *Miscellany's* correspondent who signs himself "M," was evidently Rev. J. I. Mullon. Father Muños was a man of note. He had been confessor to the royal family of Spain and procurator of his province at the Spanish court. During the campaigns of the English troops in Spain, at the time of the war with Napoleon Bonaparte, he acted as chaplain for the Irish soldiers, and won high praise from the officers. When he offered his services to Bishop Fenwick, in 1824, he had considerable trouble in obtaining permission from the authorities of his Order and the Spanish government to come to America.

<sup>15</sup> These documents certainly show the gross exaggeration, to say the least, of the Purcell diary published in the *Catholic Historical Review*, V, 239 ff. For the author's letter on this diary see the same volume of *Review*, pp. 428 ff.

ness to the fact that, while the prelate was affection and tenderness incarnate towards those who were faithful to their sublime calling, he could be stern when necessary. But the belief that love and kindness wield a stronger influence for good than fear, ever led him first to seek to win the heart. An illustration of this beautiful trait of his character is found in a letter of his cousin, the Right Rev. B. J. Fenwick. The Bishop of Boston had just started a Catholic paper called *The Jesuit*, in which were published some rather harsh arraignments of the Puritanic bigots of New England. Convinced that another course would be productive of greater effect, Cincinnati's ordinary wrote to advise the use of more moderate language in that publication.<sup>16</sup>

The loss of Father Muños was soon compensated by new additions to the bishop's clerical force. In the summer of 1830, Brother S. C. Mazzuchelli was called to Cincinnati, ordained on the fifth day of September, and sent forthwith to Mackinac, where he began a career of extraordinary usefulness. Rev. Peter Carabin, perhaps ordained on the same occasion, was placed at Monroe to aid Father Smith and attend to the missions along the Maumee Bay. There were now eight priests in Michigan. Bishop Rosati of Saint Louis had engaged to take care of the Catholics at Prairie du Chien, Fever River and other places in southwestern Wisconsin. The elder Badin had started a Catholic school among the Pottawatomies, while Father Smith, now that he had built a new church at Monroe, was making preparations to devote old Saint Anthony's to the education of the children in that locality. With

<sup>16</sup> Bishop B. J. Fenwick to Bishop E. D. Fenwick, Boston, July 19 and August 12, 1830 (Archives of Notre Dame University).

means received from the Association for the Propagation of the Faith, the bishop had been able greatly to relieve Father Richard from the burden of debt with which he had been so long oppressed.<sup>17</sup>

Father William R. Tuite, now broken with age and infirmities, returned to Saint Rose's, in Kentucky. Father De Raymaecker, whose health had failed, was sent to the same place for a rest, after spending some months as chaplain to the Colettine Poor Clares at Pittsburgh. Early in the same year, Rev. Samuel Montgomery went from Saint Joseph's to reside at Zanesville whose pastor, Father Miles, was overburdened with cares. Rev. Anthony Ganilh who had returned to the diocese, was placed in Cincinnati, and divided his time between the cathedral and the seminary. Rev. J. M. Henni now became pastor at Canton, having as assistant a young priest lately arrived from Germany.<sup>18</sup> Rev. Martin Kundig seems to have succeeded Father Henni as an itinerant missionary, but had as an additional care the pastorship of Saint Martin's, Brown County. On January 1, 1830, Rev. Edmund Quinn, a young Irish seminarian from Bardstown, was ordained;<sup>19</sup> while others still were nearing the time for their elevation to the priesthood.

<sup>17</sup> *Memoirs of Father Mazzuchelli, O.P.* (an English translation of that missionary's *Memorie Istoriche ed Edificante*); pp. 22 ff.; letters of Fathers Rese, Richard, S. T. Badin and Smith, as in note 10; Rev. S. M. Smith to Fenwick, Monroe, October 22 and December 26, 1830 (Archives of Notre Dame University); Bishop Rosati to Bishop Fenwick, April 7, 1830, and January 26, 1831 (*ibid.*); Fenwick to Rosati, February 9, 1831 (*ibid.*); *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, X, 182, 270; *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, I, 493.

<sup>18</sup> As far as we have been able to discover, this assistant of Father Henni was the only clergyman under Bishop Fenwick in Ohio who gave any scandal during that prelate's lifetime; nor was he long retained in the diocese. This fact, even were other proof lacking, shows the bishop's solicitous and successful care for the salvation of souls and for the good of religion.

<sup>19</sup> *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, X, 270.

All this, together with the rise of the new seminary and college, the good promise of the schools under the sisters at Cincinnati and Somerset, the extra assistance that had begun to arrive from the Leopoldine Society, and the reports received not only from Ohio, but from the northwest, made the good bishop happy. Although he was still in great need of priests, the prospects for the future were such that they must have shown him that his tireless zeal had now begun to reap its reward. Perhaps, indeed, this had its part in causing the holy man to renew his efforts for the appointment of Father Rese as his coadjutor,<sup>20</sup> in order that the good which had been accomplished might not only be safeguarded against interruption, but be the more surely advanced by the immediate succession of one acquainted with the people and the needs of the new Church. Certainly, we think, it gave the bishop renewed courage and prepared him for the labors of which we have yet to tell.

<sup>20</sup> Bishop Rosati to Bishop Fenwick, April 13, 1830, and January 26, 1831 (Notre Dame Archives); Fenwick to Rosati, February 9, 1831 (*ibid.*).



## CHAPTER XXII

### FURTHER PROGRESS

FROM the day of his ordination Father Fenwick had looked for only a priest's reward—brotherly love, salvation of souls, the spread of Christ's kingdom on earth and personal sanctity. As a true bishop of God, he sought no other reward after his consecration. Although a patriotic American, ardently loving his country, and deeply attached to its spirit of freedom and equality, he felt that the pulpit and politics had little in common; that the cause of civil liberty and government gains as little as that of the Church from an unwise and injudicious confusion of religious and civic duties; and that no voice should be heard in the house of God but the voice of Christian zeal and charity. He believed that a priest's greatest asset is holiness of life and zest for good—his greatest revenue fidelity to his sublime calling, souls garnered for heaven, a Christ-like character, love of God and his neighbor; that there is nothing so noble in an ambassador of Christ as an ardent zeal for the salvation of his fellowman—nothing so poor in his vocation as idleness and a worldly spirit.

Doubtless this admirable trait of our apostle helped him to win his way to many hearts in both the north and south. It aided him not only in bringing sinners to repentance, but in making converts for the Church. No doubt it contributed not a little towards gaining the admiration of his fellow-bishops. Although he seldom wrote, except in the interest of charity or religion, or on

matters of importance, and took little pains to preserve his correspondence, a number of letters still extant and bearing his address give strong evidence of the high esteem in which the friar prelate was held by the other members of the American hierarchy, and the confidence which they reposed in his judgment. Aware of his unselfish charity and the impression that he had made abroad during his travels in the interest of his own diocese, they wrote not only to request him to plead their cause before the Association for the Propagation of the Faith, or the Leopoldine Society, but even at Rome. No doubt their appeals were not made in vain; for in his goodness of heart he shrank from no sacrifice in order to aid those in need. Open and above board in all that he did, he ordinarily sent his own letters for the Propaganda to be read first by his metropolitan and then forwarded to their destination.<sup>1</sup> On blank portions of letters received by himself we have found a number of rough drafts of others to his friends and benefactors abroad. Likely written while on pastoral journeys, they reveal at once the bishop's rigid economy of time and means, the goodness of his heart, the depth of his gratitude towards those who had extended him a helping hand, and his keen interest in all that made for the good of religion.

The reader has seen how the rise of new missions, the demands of those that had been already established, and other needs of the Church in Ohio obliged our friar prelate to an almost unbroken diocesan visitation of that state; and how, withal, he had spared no pains to further the cause of religion in Michigan and the North-

<sup>1</sup> There are in the Propaganda Archives several letters of the bishop headed "Baltimore," such and such a date, although it is evident that he was in Ohio at the time they were written.

west Territory. Nor was this all. He looked after the Catholics of Kentucky across the river from Cincinnati, and in southeastern Indiana, for Bishop Flaget. Now, doubtless at the request of the same prelate, he had his priests in Michigan visit northern Indiana, and was trying to obtain a permanent pastor for Chicago and its vicinity.

Father Rese had not been able satisfactorily to arrange all matters in the northwest during his journey of which we spoke in the previous chapter. In response, therefore, to letters which he continued to receive from those parts, the bishop determined to pay a personal visit to this portion of his flock in the course of the next year, 1831. But the time preceding the spring thaw, after which travel would be better, he would devote to other important duties nearer home. Among these were the advancement of his college and seminary, and preparations for the issuance of a Catholic paper to make Catholic teaching better known and to defend it against the attacks of sectarians. For, as has been stated, the phenomenal progress of Catholicity, whether by immigration or by conversions to the faith, had aroused the fears and animus of many not of the fold. As a consequence, non-Catholic pulpits resounded with the most vehement denunciations of the Church and its adherents, while the sectarian press published all manner of charges against everything Catholic. Bishop Fenwick had long felt that one of the most effective means of counteracting this inimical propaganda, and of preserving friendly relations with those of other creeds, would be a diocesan paper devoted to a clear explanation of the Catholic faith, a defense of its principles and a judicious refutation of the

slanders which the enemy sought to cast upon the Church. Now, therefore, that he saw his way to meet the expense of such an instrument for good, he would delay the undertaking no longer.

Another matter that demanded the bishop's attention at this time, was his charge as superior of the Dominicans. This anomalous arrangement he felt, now at least that the plan of a Dominican prefecture apostolic had failed, was no longer needed; nor was it the best thing for either the diocese or the Order. Quite naturally, the stress of apostolic labors had proved too strong a temptation to use the fathers for diocesan purpose in a way that materially interfered with the proper organization of their province. This, together with Cardinal Consalvi's unhappy mandate and the consequent division of forces by the establishment of two provinces, had seriously hampered the growth of the Order which he himself had planted in the United States to help in the diffusion of Catholic faith. Well might he have been satisfied, had he succeeded in nothing else. For not only had his spiritual children accomplished much for religion in Kentucky; the sweat of their brows, their unwearied labors, their self-sacrifices, their spirit of mortification and the unflinching courage with which they had borne hardships, were the seed from which had sprung the promising Church of Ohio.

Now, therefore, that the number of diocesan clergy was on the increase, and a college and a new and enlarged seminary would soon be in operation, the bishop believed that simple justice, no less than the good of religion, demanded that the affairs of the Order should be separated from those of the diocese and placed under another head. For this reason, a chapter or council of



the fathers was convened for that purpose. It met in Cincinnati on Monday, April 18, 1831. The bishop presided. Three fathers were called from Kentucky, Revs. Stephen H. Montgomery, Joseph T. Jarboe, respectively prior and sub-prior of Saint Rose's, and Charles P. Montgomery. Three others, Fathers Nicholas D. Young, Samuel L. Montgomery and Richard P. Miles, were summoned from Ohio. Three matters were discussed, the first being the question of ecclesiastical property, which was decided in accordance with what the assembly believed to be the mind of the Cappellari-Velzi decision of May, 1828. Secondly, it was resolved that the bishop should not call any father from Saint Rose's to labor in Ohio, without the consent of the superior and council of that institution. Doubtless the reason for this enactment (but likely the question was brought up by our prelate himself) was the fact that the interests of the novitiate had been too greatly sacrificed for those of the missions, a circumstance that had given rise to some complaint. Lastly, it was agreed that the bishop should ask the Holy Father and the Most Rev. Thomas Ancarani, the Order's Vicar General at Rome, to accept his resignation of the post of superior over the Dominicans; and that he should propose Revs. R. P. Miles and N. D. Young to Father Ancarani as the assembly's first and second choice for their provincial.<sup>2</sup>

Father S. L. Montgomery, at the time of the meeting, was actually on his way from Zanesville to Saint Rose's where he was to teach in the novitiate. It was, therefore, perhaps a matter of fair exchange that Rev.

<sup>2</sup> Manuscript copy of the proceedings of this meeting in the Archives of Saint Joseph's Province. Father Young succeeded Bishop Fenwick as provincial, but did not receive his letters of appointment until after the prelate's death.

S. H. Montgomery was now permitted to resign his position as prior of the latter institution in order to assist with the seminary and college in Cincinnati, and in the preparations under way for publishing a Catholic paper. But before the close of the year Fathers J. V. Bullock and Charles D. Bowling, now that they had made up for the time lost in their theological studies by teaching in the seminary, were brought from Kentucky and stationed at Saint Joseph's.

Among the more important matters that demanded the bishop's attention in the northwest, one was the need of providing for the spiritual welfare of the immigrants who had begun to flock into that new country. Another was the Catholic education of the young. The older schools for the whites in and around Detroit, through the assistance which he had been able to give them from moneys sent him by charitable organizations in Europe, were succeeding fairly well. But the new free schools for the Indians on the Saint Joseph's River and at Arbre Croche (or Harbor Springs) needed help and teachers. That at Green Bay, through the defection of Fauvel, had failed. Besides, there was now an opportunity of obtaining aid from the government for purely Indian establishments. Two or three ineffectual attempts had been made by the priests in the northwest to found a community of sisters, as well as to obtain teachers from the Daughters of Mother Seton. Early in 1831, the elder Father Badin, taking advantage of the absence of the Indians while on the chase, visited Kentucky in an effort to procure some Dominican Sisters for his school on Saint Joseph's River.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> These facts are taken from letters of Bishop Fenwick and Fathers Reese, Richard, Smith and the two Badins in the Notre Dame Archives and the *Annales*.

Meanwhile, January 18, 1831, the good bishop's heart was rejoiced by the arrival in Cincinnati of Rev. Frederic Baraga from Austria. He came with letters of high recommendation from the Leopoldine Society, and wished to devote himself to the life of a missionary among the aborigines.<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, in April, 1831, Father Baraga, destined to become the first ordinary of Sault Sainte Marie and Marquette, started for the northwest. Following the instructions of Bishop Fenwick, he visited several localities on the way from Cincinnati. At Dayton, he was joined by the prelate. Thence the two apostolic men travelled together. Along the journey both were on the outlook for whatever good they might accomplish. For one of the secrets of the friar bishop's success was that he ever set the example for his clergy to follow. He would have them work with him; not for him. They arrived at Detroit on May 15. While there, the bishop gave an *exeat* to Rev. Peter J. Dejean who had labored on the missions of Michigan for seven years, but now wished to return to his native France.<sup>5</sup>

On the morning of May 20 our travellers sailed from Detroit for Mackinac. Here the bishop was pleased to find "an exemplary congregation of American, Canadian and Indian Catholics under the charge of" Father Mazzuchelli, whose "unwearying zeal and successful labors" had already "contributed much towards the restoration of piety and vital religion among the Indians and other Catholics in those quarters." Indeed, the young friar, although not yet a year ordained, ex-

<sup>4</sup> VERWYST, *Life and Labors of Right Rev. Frederic Baraga*, pp. 102 ff.

<sup>5</sup> VERWYST, as in the preceding note; Rev. Patrick O'Kelly, Detroit, to Rev. Frederick Rese, Cincinnati, May 21, 1831 (Notre Dame Archives); Bishop Fenwick's letter of *exeat* (copy?) to Father Dejean, "18 [May], 1831" (*ibid.*).

tended his cares to Sault Sainte Marie and even as far as Green Bay. The apostolic prelate was delighted at the zeal shown by this promising missionary. But the travellers hurried on to Arbre Croche where Father Baraga was to be installed as successor to Father De-jean. The Indians of this place, on hearing that their beloved bishop was coming, rang the church bell in joy, ran from their wigwams to meet the boat in which he came, and fell on their knees to receive his blessing. He celebrated the feast of Corpus Christi at Arbre Croche. Of the occasion he wrote to his friend, Father Rese:

After Mass we had a procession of the Blessed Sacrament, with an order, dignity and devotion seldom witnessed even in civilized countries. I believe that I found more piety, faith and respect there than on any similar occasion among our American Catholics. Yes, my friend, I can say in all truth that it was a wonderful day for me; and that I never felt so satisfied and consoled. The Indians laid mats and other fabrics on the ground, and strewed the path of the procession with flowers and grass. Truly, I would gladly exchange my residence in populous Cincinnati, together with my dignity, for a hut and the happy lot of a missionary among these good Indians.<sup>6</sup>

From Arbre Croche Bishop Fenwick went back to Mackinac further to aid the cause of the Church on that island. Revs. J. I. Mullan and S. H. Montgomery had expressed a desire to give their services to the Indian Missions. Now, although he could not well spare the services of these men from Ohio, the prelate was tempted to accept the former's offer and to station him at Mackinac, that his aggressive eloquence might check the proselytizing spirit of Rev. William M. Ferry and his wife. After a week's incessant toil at this place, the

<sup>6</sup> Fenwick to Rese, Mackinac, June 1831 (*Berichte der Leopoldinen-Stiftung im Kaiserthume Oesterreich*, No. 3, pp. 22-24).



bishop and Father Mazzuchelli journeyed on to Green Bay. Here, owing to the want of a resident pastor and the long intervals at which the mission could be visited by a priest, religion was in a less happy condition. Still the people, the Indians especially, were overjoyed at the sight of their spiritual father. For three weeks the bishop and Father Mazzuchelli labored from early morning until late at night to arouse the fervor of the faithful. Nor were their efforts in vain. Not a few who had been away from the sacraments for twenty, thirty or forty years made their peace with God. Arrangements were made for the erection of a new church on two acres of land donated for that purpose. The Catholic Indian school was again set on foot and placed in charge of some pious ladies. An agent of Indian affairs for the northwest, though a non-Catholic, promised to use his influence to obtain government aid for the education of the Indian youth. All in all, the bishop was so well pleased with the result of this visit that he felt that Green Bay would be a splendid place for some of the Redemptorist Fathers whom he expected from Vienna.

Arbre Croche, Mackinac and other missions now demanded further attention from the zealous prelate. On the island of Mackinac a motion was set on foot for a new church and for reorganizing the Catholic school. To this point, the aged bishop had been accompanied in his northern travels by the young Milanese friar, Father Mazzuchelli. Thereafter, his journeys were made alone. Returning from the north, he proceeded to the settlement on Saint Joseph's River, southwestern Michigan, and was received with open arms by the elder Badin and his Indian charges. At Mackinac Bishop

Fenwick stopped with Colonel Boyd; at Arbre Croche he stayed with Father Baraga; at Green Bay and elsewhere, as on his previous visit, he was obliged to lodge in tents, or wherever he could find protection. But on Saint Joseph's River he appears to have been the guest of Pokagan, the chief of the Pottawatomies. Thence our traveller proceeded again to Detroit to give his attention to the Church in that city and the surrounding missions. Everywhere he was pleased and encouraged not merely by the commendable zeal of his clergy, but by the immigration of Catholics into the northwest country. The two Badins and Fathers Smith, Mazzuchelli and O'Kelly seem to have been giving much attention to these new-comers. As a consequence, congregations had begun to be formed in various localities. At Greenbush, under the direction of Father O'Kelly, a church to be named after Saint Michael was under way. As was his custom on his travels, the bishop administered about all the sacraments, except that of holy orders. Some three hundred were confirmed at this time in the various missions of the northwest.

His work finished in this part of his jurisdiction, our prelate began his homeward journey. Although matters of importance called for attention in the episcopal city, he could not resist the impulse of his zeal to visit nearly all the churches in Ohio before returning to Cincinnati. At Saint Joseph's, Perry County, by reason of incessant labors and constant exposure, he became seriously ill. His wonderful recuperative powers and great strength of will, however, soon enabled him to continue his way home which he reached late in September. To his no little happiness, the bishop found the college, to which was given the name of The Athe-

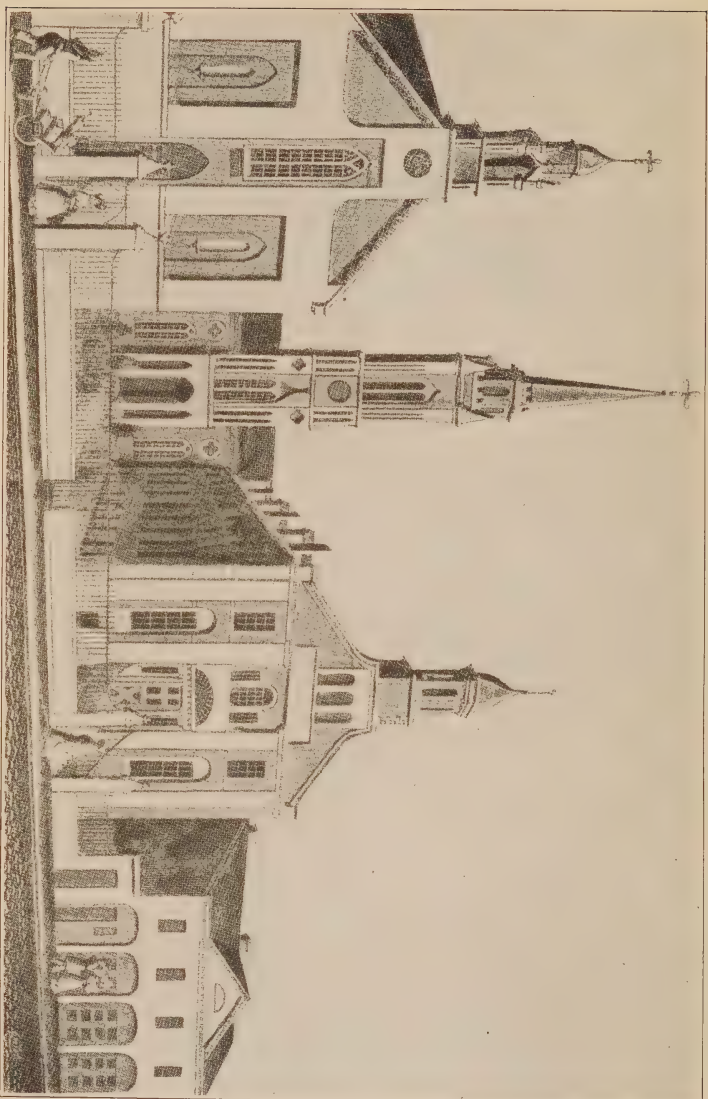
naeum, practically completed. The new Saint Francis Xavier's Seminary was also under way, while a small press that he had obtained, was set up at the rear of the cathedral and in readiness to begin its work of diffusing a correct knowledge of the Catholic faith, dissipating popular error in regard to the Church, meeting attacks of the enemy upon her spirit and doctrine, and defending truth. Meantime, unable to resist the appeal of the people and pastor, the zealous prelate, in spite of his fatigue and feeble health and the important things he was about to install in Cincinnati for the good of religion, proceeded to Saint Martin's, Brown County, where he administered the sacrament of confirmation and encouraged work on the new church then in course of construction.<sup>7</sup>

The Athenaeum was opened on Monday, October 17, 1831. Doubtless this was one of the happiest days in Bishop Fenwick's life, for it marked the consummation of a work long and devoutly prayed for. The building is described as "elegant and commodious," or "spacious and beautiful," two stories and a half high, with an ample and well lighted basement, and one hundred and twenty or thirty feet long by fifty in width. It ran parallel with the cathedral to which it was later joined by the seminary and episcopal residence. Above each of the structures rose a commanding tower. The spires of the cathedral and seminary were crowned with splendid gilded crosses. Alpheus White, a convert and one

<sup>7</sup> The facts concerning this apostolic journey of the bishop are taken from his letters to Father Rese, June 1 and 11 and July 1, 1831 (the *Berichte der Leopoldinen-Stiftung*, etc., No. 3, pp. 22-27); *The Catholic Telegraph*, October 22 and 29, 1831, and *The Catholic Press*, December 15, 1831.—The documents in the *Berichte*, like practically all of Fenwick's letters to Rese, were probably written in French. In default of the originals, we were obliged to use German translations.







1. SAINT PETER'S CATHEDRAL. 2. SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER'S SEMINARY. 3. THE ATHENÆUM

of Cincinnati's noted early architects, drew the plans and superintended the construction of the college and seminary. When completed the group was regarded as one of the architectural attractions of a city that has always taken an honest pride in its public buildings. Rev. Frederic Baraga, just arrived from Vienna, Austria, writes of the college: "The building is beautiful, well proportioned, large and substantial, the masonry and roof being now completed. When it is entirely completed, through the help of God and good men, it will be a permanent and incalculably great benefit to this country bereft of Catholic educational and scholarly institutions. . . ." The cathedral, he says, is "really beautiful and remarkably large." That these early descriptions are not overdrawn may be seen from the picture which we here reproduce. That the college and seminary, like the cathedral, were solidly and substantially built is shown by the fact that a part of it remained in use for educational purposes until 1891, or for sixty years.<sup>8</sup>

The schema of studies which appeared in the public prints of the time, reveals a creditable curriculum; and we are justified in the belief that it was carried out, as far as the circumstances of the period and the busy lives of the priests permitted. The bishop was the president, while the office of vice-president was given to the vicar general, Father Rese. The students were mostly non-Catholics. But, as has been seen, the bishop hoped for much good to religion from the education, under Catholic influences, of such as these. Nor can there be

<sup>8</sup> *The Catholic Telegraph*, October 29, 1831; SCHAFER, *Cincinnati Directory*, 1840; Rev. Frederic Baraga to the Leopoldine Society, Cincinnati, January 21, 1831 (HAMMER, *Eduard Dominik Fenwick, der Apostel von Ohio*, pp. 104 ff.); *The Catholic Almanac* for 1848, p. 67; *The U. S. Catholic Magazine*, VI, 94-95. See also notes 2, 3, 4 and 5 in Chapter XVII.

any doubt that their young minds were favorably impressed by the clergy with whom they thus came into immediate contact. For instance, that most exemplary missionary, Father Baraga, writing of how he was edified by the episcopal household on his arrival in Cincinnati, gives us a pretty picture of the life led by Bishop Fenwick and his priests and seminarians in the humble little rectory and seminary that preceded the structure of which we have just spoken. "The discipline that obtains in the house here [he says] pleases me very much. It is truly monastic. The bishop is our guardian. At five in the morning, the signal is given for rising. Before and after meals grace is always recited in monastic fashion. After the meal, the pious prelate leads the way to the church which immediately adjoins the priest's house, that we may make a short adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. . . ."<sup>9</sup>

The first issue of the new Catholic paper appeared under the title of *The Catholic Telegraph*, Saturday, October 22, 1831. But, as will be seen, because of other important business, the zealous bishop did not wait in Cincinnati for this event which may be said to mark another epoch in his life. However, the pious enterprise was his conception, as his were the courage and perseverance that brought it to a realization. *The Telegraph*, as it is popularly called, was the first Catholic paper published west of the Alleghany Mountains; still in existence, it is today the oldest in the United States. The great Bishop England gave the new journalistic attempt a warm welcome, and spoke of it in terms of

<sup>9</sup> Father Rese to the French Association for the Propagation of the Faith, New York, May 20, 1832 (*Annales*, VI, 178 ff.); Father Baraga to the Leopoldine Society, as in the preceding note; *The Catholic Telegraph*, October 22, 1831.—In his letter Father Baraga speaks in terms of the highest praise of Bishop Fenwick.

praise. In this connection, it may be of interest to the reader to note a fortunate find of the bishop. In his efforts to get native seminarians he obtained, through the bishop of Boston, Josue M. Young, a convert of Rev. Charles D. French of Portland, Maine. Young was a professional printer, and gave much of his time as a seminarian to presswork on *The Catholic Telegraph*. Later he became the second bishop of Erie.<sup>10</sup>

It was probably on his return from the northwest that Bishop Fenwick received a letter from his cousin, Doctor Fenwick of Boston, dated April 6, 1831. A part of it deserves to be incorporated in our biography as showing the attention attracted far and wide by the zealous efforts of Ohio's apostle. Besides, it must have afforded his candid soul no little honest consolation.

Through persons who have lately come here from the state of Ohio [writes Boston's ordinary], I accidentally and with much pleasure heard of the great strides which our holy religion is making through all the territory of your extensive diocese. Indeed, such a report was not unexpected; neither was it altogether new. For the weekly religious publications of our Calvinists have been complaining for a long time of the rapid progress which the papist community makes in that territory. This grieves them doubly because our New-Englanders have contributed much towards building up the state of Ohio. The most grievous thing, however, seems to be the starting of your college for the education of priests which, as their complaints in the newspapers distinctly indicate, will thwart the ends of the opponents. From the fullness of my heart do I wish you success in this well-considered and richly blessed enterprise; for such an institution, to the best of my judgment, must be of incalculable benefit for firmly planting our holy faith in the Valley of the Mississippi. I cannot better tell you my joy in this matter than by telling you

<sup>10</sup> B. J. Fenwick to E. D. Fenwick, Boston, July 19 and August 12, 1830 (Notre Dame Archives); *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, November 5, 1831; CLARKE, *Lives of the Deceased Bishops*, II, 514 ff.



that I believe such an institution—by which one can obtain priests educated in the native tongue, under one's own direction and imbued with one's own spirit—to be the most desirable and useful of all undertakings. And on that account I sincerely admire your wise measure in seeking the aid of pious Europeans; for if one has a good supply of such workers in the vineyard of the Lord, then parishes and churches must follow. Nor can the churches already established last for any time without resident pastors. Would to God that I might soon start a similar foundation! What immeasurable good it would do here in Boston—this hotbed of Unitarianism and Puritanism. . . .<sup>11</sup>

Bishop Fenwick, apparently foreseeing that he had not much longer to live, now set himself to bring to a happy consummation the plans he had formed for the betterment of that part of the American Church which had been placed under his charge. Among these plans the welfare, both spiritual and temporal, of the Indians loomed large. The Catholic schools which had been established in the northwest, he believed, would not only be the best safeguard of the red man against the proselytizing spirit of sectarians, but the surest means of bringing him to civilization and a knowledge of how to procure temporal comforts. Prior to this time, the good prelate had placed a number of Indian boys to learn different trades—even brought several to Cincinnati for that purpose and lodged them in the episcopal residence. An Indian girl was entrusted to the Sisters of Charity in the same city.<sup>12</sup> The motive for this was that

<sup>11</sup> B. J. Fenwick to E. D. Fenwick, Boston, April 6, 1831 (the *Berichte*, as in note 3, No. 3, pp. 27–29).—This document was certainly written in English. In default of the original, we were obliged to use the German translation.

<sup>12</sup> Rese to the Leopoldine Society, August 3, 1831 (*Berichte*, etc., as in note 6, No. 3, pp. 20–21); Fenwick to Samuel Hamilton, Washington, D. C., December 16, 1831, and to the Hon. Lewis Cass, Washington, D. C., November 30, 1831, and January 20, 1832 (photostat copies from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.).

such youths, when they became sufficiently expert, might return to their homes and instruct the tribes to which they belonged in the same useful arts. Himself without the means necessary for carrying out this benevolent measure as he would like, the bishop determined to go to Washington and plead his cause before the government.

The prelate also needed more professors for his college and seminary, as well as more priests for the ever increasing missions both in Ohio and the northwest. Earlier in the same year he had extended invitations to Revs. Michael F. Wheeler and Charles C. Pise, both of the diocese of Baltimore, for the former post.<sup>13</sup> Americans, all else being equal, he felt were better suited for the instruction of the native youth. Sim-

The following letter of some of the Indian chiefs at Arbre Croche to Bishop Fenwick (taken from Verwyst's *Life of Bishop Baraga*, pp. 128-29) cannot, we think, fail to interest the reader, as it gives an insight at once into the friar prelate's efforts in behalf of the red man and the Indians' love for their children. The document is not dated, but we fancy it must belong to 1830 or early 1831.

"Our Father!—You desire to have some boys of our nation for Cincinnati to place them in apprenticeship with some tradesmen. We are very much pleased with your proposal and we send you four of our children from Old and New Arbre Croche: namely, Joseph Boyd and Michael Shawanibinessi (Southern Bird) to learn the blacksmith and locksmith trade; Michael Fenwick and Michael Medoayandagashe to learn the carpenter and cabinetmaker's trade. We also wish that these children learn to read and write your language.

"Our Father! We pray you to get a good place for our children and take fatherly care of them, for they are also your children in Jesus Christ. We beg you also to send the married man you promised us. We will give him and his family some land, so that he can live with us.

"We recommend ourselves to your prayers and give you our hand.

"Joseph Nawimashkote, head-chief of Old Arbre Croche and father of Medoayandagashe. Weshimaweto, father of Michael Shawanibinessi. Joseph Kiwekwaam, father of Michael Fenwick. Wabisagime (White Mosquito), father of Joseph Boyd. Leon Pakusikan, Alexander Missawakwat, head-chiefs of Arbre Croche."

<sup>13</sup> Rev. William Matthews to Bishop Fenwick, Washington, D. C., September 25, 1831 (Notre Dame Archives).—Doctor Pise was the only priest who ever held the post of Chaplain of the United States Senate.

ilarly, he preferred a native born clergy, or at least those who spoke good English for the American element in Ohio, his diocese proper. Furthermore, priests with a good knowledge of English were now much needed in Michigan. Those who spoke German or French, or at least seminarians acquainted with those languages, could be obtained from abroad. But as vocations had not yet developed among the natives of Ohio, the bishop looked largely to the older east for English-speaking additions to his clerical force.

Indeed, the necessity of doing something for the Indians in the immediate future and the want of such priests as those of whom we have just spoken, appeared so imperative that Bishop Fenwick did not wait in Cincinnati, after the opening of the college, until the appearance of the first issue of *The Catholic Telegraph*. Doubtless, however, he knew that this important enterprise was entrusted to competent hands. On October 16, 1831, he ordained James Reid deacon and Denis Deloughery subdeacon, gave the four minor orders to Emmanuel Thienpont, and admitted Brother James H. Clarkson, O.P., to the tonsure. On the 18th, the day after the dedication of The Athenaeum, having administered deaconship to Deloughery, subdeaconship to Thienpont and the minor orders to Brother Hyacinth, the tireless prelate set out from the episcopal city for Washington and Baltimore.<sup>14</sup> But of his efforts through the east in behalf of religion we shall speak in the next chapter, which will show a glorious crowning of a truly apostolic and saintly life.

<sup>14</sup> *The Catholic Telegraph*, October 22 and 29, 1831.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### A GLORIOUS ENDING

THE year of which the present chapter treats, the last in his life, seems to the writer one of the most glorious in Bishop Fenwick's episcopate. The zealous prelate, on reaching the National Capitol, hastened to lay the cause of the Indians before the Hon. Lewis Cass, then secretary of war; for the disposition of the moneys allotted by congress for the education and civilization of the Indians then belonged to that department of the government. It was perhaps fortunate for the bishop that Mr. Cass had been governor of Michigan for many years, and was thus conversant with his zealous efforts in behalf of the aboriginal Americans in the northwest. That he received a favorable hearing will presently be seen from the document which we shall lay before the reader. But in Washington, as at the seats of government the world over, the official wheels turn slowly, a circumstance that demands much time and patience.

Meanwhile, Bishop Fenwick proceeded to Baltimore and Mount Saint Mary's, Emmitsburg, on the other business that had brought him to the east. At Mount Saint Mary's, several students, won by his ardent appeals, deep piety and attractive personality, proffered themselves for the missions under his charge. Two young lay students from Cincinnati, by the name of Meline, were also secured as teachers for the Athenaeum; while Rev. Joseph V. Wiseman who was at Mount Saint Mary's, tendered his services for the institution in the west. At first, this proffer was declined,



but was afterwards accepted on the recommendation of Rev. John B. Purcell, president of the college. One of the ecclesiastical students seeking to enlist in our prelate's cause was a native of Philadelphia, and had been adopted by that diocese. This was Edward T. Collins, destined to occupy a conspicuous place in the history of Ohio's Church. To obtain his release Cincinnati's ordinary continued his way to the City of Brotherly Love. While there he had Bishop Kenrick write to solicit a place at the College of the Propaganda for the two Indian students of whom we have spoken on a previous page. Fenwick himself wrote to Pope Gregory XVI, the former Cardinal Cappellari, on the same subject. From Doctor Kenrick's letter we learn that, as was the case with many of his journeys, the friar prelate undertook this extra travel partly in the interest of charity.<sup>1</sup> It is not improbable, indeed, that he was invited to Philadelphia by Bishop Kenrick that he might try his hand again at pouring oil on the troubled waters in that city.

On his return to Washington, Bishop Fenwick had another interview with the Hon. Lewis Cass. And a few days later (November 30, 1831) he wrote to the same gentleman:

*Sir:—*

Permit me to call your attention to the Petition of the Ottawa tribe of Indians, dated at Michillimackinac on the 14 June, 1829, which is enclosed in this communication; and as the Bishop alluded to in that petition, under whose protection the schools

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Fenwick, Washington, D. C., to Rev. J. B. Purcell, Emmitsburg, December 9, 1831, and same to same from Nonesuch, D. C., January 22, 1832 (Notre Dame Archives); Bishop Kenrick to Cardinal Pedicini, November 14, 1831 (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. 10); Gregory XVI to Bishop Fenwick, April 14, 1832 (*The Catholic Telegraph*, July 7, 1832); MELINE-McSWEENEY, *The Story of the Mountain*, I, 277-78.

herein named are established, to ask not only the relief they have prayed for, but all and every assistance you can give to aid one under the Act of Congress in such cases made and provided [for]. You will perceive by the endorsement upon the copy of the Act of Congress on that subject, which is also enclosed, that relief has not been sooner extended to those unfortunate people because it was represented that at the time the application was made for them, "there were no funds at the disposal of the Indian Department."

I have anxiously waited untill now, and am pleased to know from the personal interview I had with you in your office on the 21 inst., that such is not the case at this time. And as no one knows better than yourself the real situation of those people and the great advantage they [have] already received, and will hereafter receive, from the establishments I have made to improve their condition and to instruct them "in the mode of agriculture suited to their situation," and "for teaching their children in reading, writing and arithmetic, and for performing such other duties as may be enjoined"; I feel confident that as full and ample [an] allowance for them will be made as is in your power to grant. I feel this assurance, not only from the knowledge I have of your character, but from your full approval of my plan, as expressed in your letter when Governor of Michigan, which is also enclosed.<sup>2</sup>

The bishop then proceeds to designate the schools for which he seeks aid. One is at Arbre Croche. It was established in June, 1829, and has sixty children, the clothing and maintenance of whom have cost him \$1200.00. Furthermore, he has four youths from this tribe at his schools in Cincinnati; three others he has placed at Mackinac to learn the trades of blacksmith and carpentry. The second institution, founded in September, 1830, is among the Pottawatomies on the Saint Joseph's River, and has some thirty pupils. The

<sup>2</sup> Photostat copy from the files of the Office of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.

third, established in June, 1831, is at Green Bay. Three thousand dollars could be very advantageously employed at these schools for the uplift of the aborigines, and he feels assured that the Indian agents in those districts would sanction the use of such a sum for this purpose.<sup>3</sup>

The following day, December 1, and on February 1, 1832, he wrote to Rev. Peter P. Potier, O.P., Weybridge, Surrey, England, to thank him for some copies of the *Catholic Tracts*. These, he said, he would have reprinted on his press in Cincinnati, as they would make good reading for the people of Ohio and Michigan. Divine Providence, the letter continues, has now provided the bishop with sufficient means to proceed with his "works for the greater glory of God." If some of the fathers would come to Ohio, they could find a congenial field for their zeal. The Order in the United States promises well. The Church prospers in both Ohio and Michigan. Fourteen years before there was not a Catholic temple of prayer in the former state. Now he has twenty-four priests and twenty-two churches under his jurisdiction, not to count several congregations that have no house of prayer. A college is in full swing at Cincinnati and gives good promise, while the seminary in the same city has thirteen students. A copy of the first issue of *The Catholic Tele-*

<sup>3</sup> Father Rese in a letter to the Leopoldine Society, August 3, 1831 (*Berichte der Leopoldinen-Stiftung*, etc., No. 3, p. 20), as has been stated, tells us that the bishop had also four Indian youths from Ohio (three boys and one girl) in his schools at Cincinnati. These and the four mentioned in this letter, together with the two seminarians and two novices whom we have seen at Saint Rose's, in Kentucky, make twelve Indians whom he sought to prepare in a special manner for the betterment of their race.

*graph* has just been received, and is being forwarded to England.

The bishop's business with the government dragged along more slowly than he had expected. In the meantime, he had an attack of the illness to which he had long been subject, and which, together with bad weather, confined him to the house some three weeks. On December 9, 1831, he wrote to Rev. John B. Purcell, president of the College at Emmitsburg:

I find it will [be] impracticable for me to return to Ohio before the new year. I had proposed to be at Baltimore the 10, with you on the 12 or 13, and on the high road to Ohio on [the] 15 or 16 at latest. But "*homo proponit; Deus disponit*". I am confined by a bad cold and fever and severe weather. Moreover, my business with [the] government is not settled and requires delay. As soon as circumstances will permit after [the] commencement of the new year, I shall set out, *Deo juvante*, and will either come to see you, or write for Mr. Collins to meet me at Fredericktown. You will please to inform him that I have his *exeat* from Bishop Kenrick. The other two young men will do better to remain with you, if you please, till they finish their theology.<sup>5</sup>

On the same date as the letter given above, Samuel S. Hamilton directed a letter from the Office of Indian Affairs to Bishop Fenwick to the effect that one thousand dollars per annum had been allotted him for his three Indian schools. Two hundred and fifty dollars, he said, would be paid quarterly, beginning January 1, 1832. To this communication the prelate replied on December 16 in grateful acknowledgment of the help that had been accorded him. But he felt that a greater

<sup>4</sup> Archives of the Dominican Fathers, Haverstock Hill, London, England. The first of these letters is headed "*Cincinnati, Ohio*"; but it was evidently written in Washington.

<sup>5</sup> See note 1.



allowance should be made for the school at Arbre Croche; for here three teachers were employed. Besides, the place had cost him considerable money, and the Indians had already made notable improvement in their manner of living. The bishop would also be pleased to know how and where he would draw on the government aid; and the propriety of asking the Secretary of War or Congress for an extra allowance in behalf of the institution at Arbre Croche.<sup>6</sup> Owing to the complexity of the government machinery and other circumstances, this business was not terminated until the latter part of the following January.

But in the meantime, the bishop, with his characteristic courage, summoned his strength and proceeded to Saint Mary's County to see his niece, Mrs. William Plowden, who was on her death-bed. The Sacred Heart Parish, southern Maryland, he found visited by an appalling epidemic of sickness and without a pastor. The zealous prelate, in his accustomed way, began at once to look after the spiritual welfare of the distressed people. To Father Purcell he writes that he spent fifteen days there "chiefly in visiting the sick, consoling the afflicted and burying the dead. I found great distress and mortality there, and no priest to attend them. . . . God, in His goodness, restored my health and vigour to go to the desolate and forlorn to administer comfort and His grace." Now he will soon begin his homeward journey. On his arrival at Mount Saint Mary's, he will probably ordain Mr. Collins subdeacon; but will leave that gentleman, as well as the other two whom he had adopted, at the college until the end of the year, if their services are needed. He now feels dis-

<sup>6</sup> Photostat copies from the Office of Indian Affairs, Washington, D. C.

posed, "if you [Father Purcell] yet recommend it," to accept Father Wiseman and to take him along to Cincinnati.<sup>7</sup> In a letter to Rev. John McElroy, S.J., telling of the cause of his delay and of his experience in southern Maryland, the prelate says again:

Unfavourable circumstances have detained and prevented me from communicating with you sooner. Sickness and bad weather confined me two or three weeks. When permitted by Divine Providence, I went to Bushwood to console the afflicted [Plowden] family as well as the desolate and forlorn congregation of the Sacred Heart, without a pastor, oppressed with sickness and terrified by death in every direction. I visited and administered spiritual comfort to many, assisted several in their last moments, and buried five or six in one day, most of whom died unassisted by a priest.<sup>8</sup>

His affairs concluded at Washington, Bishop Fenwick started on his homeward journey; but other matters of importance to his diocese took him to Baltimore, Emmitsburg and Philadelphia. No sooner did he gain the borders of Ohio than we find him resuming his accustomed round of visitations. In this way, it was not until the last day of March, 1832, that the apostolic prelate regained the episcopal city. *The Catholic Telegraph* of April 7 thus records his return:

It affords us great pleasure to announce the arrival of our venerable Bishop. He reached this place last Saturday, after a long absence, during which he was unremittingly employed in providing for the advancement of the great cause of religion in this western world. [The paper then tells of the parishes the prelate visited on his homeward journey through Ohio, and proceeds to say:] On all these occasions he went through a great

<sup>7</sup> Letter of January 22, 1832, as in note 1.

<sup>8</sup> Fenwick, Nonesuch, D. C., to Rev. J. McElroy, Frederick, January 23, 1832 (Archives of the New York-Maryland Province of Jesuit Fathers, McElroy Papers, Case 12 B).

share of the labor, nor did he neglect to pay a paternal visit to all the Catholic families in those places. He was everywhere received with that affectionate regard, to which he exhibits such irresistible claims by his amiable and paternal deportment. May he long be preserved to us, to witness wonders in the diffusion of the Catholic faith, still more stupendous than those for which he has hitherto labored so successfully.

Bishop Fenwick had good reason to rejoice over the continued progress of religion in his diocese. On his return home he found the academy of the Dominican Sisters at Somerset, together with the academy and orphan asylum of the Sisters of Charity at Cincinnati, in flourishing condition. The Athenaeum gave promise perhaps beyond his most sanguine expectation, while the seminary was nearing completion. Similarly *The Catholic Telegraph*, following the lines mapped out for it by the prudent ordinary, had begun to attract attention, to enlighten the people, to win honest minds, and further to dissipate religious prejudices. Its tone was mild and conciliatory, for the times at least. Somewhat of an exception to this rule was made, however, in regard to a few sectarian journals and in the publication of a controversy of Father Mullan with the Rev. William M. Ferry of Mackinac. The reason for this exception, no doubt, was because these sheets and this reverend gentleman were led by their venom into the grossest misrepresentations of the Church and the vilest charges against everything Catholic; and it was judged best to return them a little of their own coin. The Catholics, whose numbers continued to increase through immigration and conversions, became more faithful in their religious practices with the passage of time.

Owing to the needs of his vast diocese, the bishop had

spent scarce three months out of the last twelve in the episcopal city. Yet he had been at home but a few days, on his return from the east, when we find him making preparations to begin another tour of the missions not only in Ohio, but in the distant northwest. In both places new congregations and new churches were under way. In Ohio, for instance, Rev. Edmund Quinn had about completed Saint Mary's at Tiffin, while Saint Pius' at Steubenville was almost as far advanced. This latter was under the care of Father McGrady, O.P., pastor of Saint Paul's, near the present Dungannon. Other houses of prayer were practically ready for use, or in course of construction, at Hamilton, Norwalk and perhaps Clinton. All these called for attention. From Michigan came appeals for help, as well temporal as spiritual. Indeed, our prelate, on his return to Cincinnati, found the elder Badin there to solicit an assistant priest for the Indians and other Catholics on the upper Saint Joseph's River. Rev. Ghisler Boheme, though not yet in priest's orders, was sent with him to catechise the Indians, and to learn their language. About the same time, or a little later, Rev. John Lostrie went to Detroit to aid aged Father Richard. In the northwest, the old trustee system which had been unfortunately bequeathed to Bishop Fenwick in those parts, was still the cause of trouble. This he doubtless wished totally to eradicate, that his successor there might be spared a nuisance which had sorely tried his own good temper. Furthermore, as we learn from Father Reese, the holy man felt that he had not long to live, and he wished to visit once more the flocks which God had entrusted to his care before being called to his reward.

About the time of his return from the east, Bishop



Fenwick received a letter from the prefect of the Propaganda agreeing to admit his two Indian youths, William Maccatebinessi (Blackbird) and Augustine Hamelin, into the Propaganda College. The former was a full-blooded aboriginal and the son of the chief of the Ottawas at Arbre Croche (probably the chief Blackbird of whom we have spoken on previous pages); while the latter was a half-breed born of a French Canadian father and his squaw wife. On April 10, therefore, the prelate despatched Father Rese with these youths to New York that he might place them on a boat for Marseilles, whence they would continue their way to Rome.<sup>9</sup>

Owing no doubt to his frequent and long absences, the bishop now appointed Father Mullon president of the Athenaeum.<sup>10</sup> But he busied himself with the Church and schools in Cincinnati and with the nearer missions. As lack of means had prevented the building of a church for the Germans in the episcopal city, the Catholics who spoke this language, worshipped at the cathedral, although they had been formed into a distinct congregation, and had their own pastor. The Holy Week services which were conducted with extraordinary pomp and ceremonial, drawing immense crowds to the cathedral, were crowned on Holy Saturday, April 21, with the ordination of Rev. James Reid as priest and of Rev. Emmanuel Thienpont as deacon. Father Reid was now appointed pastor of the congregation in Brown County, while Father Kundig, it

<sup>9</sup> *The Catholic Telegraph*, April 21, 1832; Father Rese to Cardinal Pedicini, New York, May 15, 1832 (Propaganda Archives, America Centrale, Vol. 10).

<sup>10</sup> *The Catholic Telegraph*, April 14, 1832. Father Mullon is the only priest in Ohio during the time of Bishop Fenwick whom we have found expressing the least doubt about the success of the college. He likely felt that he did not receive the recognition due to his labors and ability.

would seem, was delegated to begin preparations for building a church for the Germans in Cincinnati.<sup>11</sup> Work on the new seminary proceeded as fast as circumstances permitted. In this connection, a part of a letter of the bishop to Rev. Francis Jamison, vice president of Mount Saint Mary's, Emmitsburg, deserves a place in the bishop's biography as showing the breadth of his charity, the goodness of his heart, his zeal and his hopes for that portion of the American Church under his care.

CINCINNATI, 25th May, 1832.

*Rev. and dear Sir:*—Your favor of the 17th inst. is before me. I sincerely and cordially congratulate you on the pleasing and happy result of the Archbishop's last visit. My warmest wishes for the prosperity of your establishment are gratified. The prayers of the good Sisters and your real friends have been graciously heard. The Blessed Virgin, Mother of the afflicted, and St. Joseph have, I think, proved to be your friends and intercessors. I feel as much gratified as if such a favor had been conferred on myself after the many and long trials you have had. . . .<sup>12</sup>

I had a severe spell of chills and fever which reduced me much. I am now, I hope, better, having missed *both* these last three days. I shall probably be absent in Michigan about the time Father Collins might be here. If health will permit me after Pentecost, I shall visit my Indian missions. His services are really much wanted here for the college and congregation, and in my absence he will be as cordially received by my Vicar General, Mr. Rese, and by Messrs. Mullon, Wiseman and Deloughery as by myself. Rev. Mr. Wiseman does well, gives great satisfaction, edifies all by his regularity and piety. I have constituted him Superior of the Seminarians; he conducts them well, teaches a Latin class and

<sup>11</sup> Letter of Rev. Frederic Baraga to the Leopoldine Society, Cincinnati, January 21, 1832 (HAMMER, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-07); *The Catholic Telegraph*, April 28 and May 5, 1832.

<sup>12</sup> The bishop refers here to an attempt to close the seminary department of Mount Saint Mary's.

Spanish and bookkeeping, preaches alternately and hears confessions. . . .<sup>13</sup>

To Father Peter Potier he wrote again on June 12 in answer to a letter that he had just received, and expressed a regret that one of his letters from Washington had not reached his friend. The prelate tells anew the prospects of the Friars Preacher in the United States, and repeats his invitation for some of the English Dominicans to join them. It is an affectionate letter, in the course of which he says: "My college is increasing daily and, I have very little doubt, will in a short time secure a considerable share of public patronage. I am now building a Seminary for my diocese, which will unite the college and the cathedral, and present to the view a range of buildings calculated to adorn our rising city."<sup>14</sup>

Two days later (June 14), the hard-working prelate left Cincinnati on his last pastoral visit. He was accompanied by Rev. Augustus Jeanjean of New Orleans who was on his way to Rome, but had been persuaded to go with the enfeebled bishop on this apostolic tour. At Somerset he met, by prearrangement, Father Rese, to whom he gave instructions in regard to the government of the diocese during his absence.<sup>15</sup> Thence the two travellers proceeded to Lancaster and Canton. Previously to this, a plan had been set on foot to obtain some sisters from the community of the Colettine Poor Clares at Pittsburgh for the Indian school at Arbre

<sup>13</sup> MELINE-McSWEENEY, *op. cit.*, 577-78.

<sup>14</sup> See note 4 for archives.

<sup>15</sup> *The Catholic Telegraph*, June 16, 1832; Father Rese to the Association for the Propagation of the Faith (*Annales*, VI, 138); Fenwick to Rese, Canton, June 30, 1832 (Notre Dame Archives).—This letter of the bishop is headed simply "June 30," without the year or place; but these are shown by the context and certain facts that it mentions.

Croche. While waiting for these to join him at Canton, the bishop visited the nearer missions. From Canton he wrote his vicar general at Cincinnati, June 30, to give further instructions on matters of importance. Besides showing a keen interest in every detail of diocesan matters, the letter gives minute directions for Father Kundig in his visit to the scattered Germans which he had just begun. The prelate will probably call Revs. Ghisler Boheme and Floribund Bonduel to Detroit for ordination in that city on his return from Green Bay. He asks Father Rese what he thinks would be the best place in which to locate the expected Redemptorists, and closes his letter thus: "Tell all our good people to pray hard for me, that I may go and return safe and sound. Accept my blessing for everybody"—words likely inspired by the dreadful plague of Asiatic cholera which had appeared and begun its fatal work.<sup>16</sup> For though the man of God feared not death, and seems to have had a presentiment that his end was not far away, he wished to finish this apostolic journey, returning home to die in his episcopal city.

Three letters that Bishop Fenwick received about this time deserve notice here. One of these was from the ordinary of Charleston; another from Doctor Flaget. The former, anxious that provincial councils should be held more regularly, wrote to learn our prelate's sentiments on that subject; the latter requested his consent that a part of Indiana should be placed under the jurisdiction of Cincinnati. We have not discovered the prelate's reply in either case; but we fancy

<sup>16</sup> Bishop Fenwick's letter as in the preceding note. It seems certain that the Poor Clares did not go to Arbree Croche, as was expected. Although it has been stated that these sisters were in Green Bay as early as 1830, we have been able to find no trace of them in the northwest until they went to Detroit under Bishop Rese.



that it was favorable in both. The third document, because of its author, its broader interest, and its more intimate connection with our subject, we shall give in full. On the reception of Bishop Fenwick's letter requesting the admittance of his two Indian youths at the College of the Propaganda, Gregory XVI wrote:

TO OUR VENERABLE BROTHER,  
EDWARD, BISHOP OF CINCINNATI:

*Venerable Brother:* Health and the Apostolic Blessing. We have received your letter of the 15th November, last year, which We accept as an evidence of your worthy zeal for religion and your attachment to the Holy See. Your favor was indeed grateful to our heart in that it contained your cordial congratulations on the Supreme Pontificate being entrusted to Our weakness, and on the suppression of the disturbances that had been stirred up in the provinces of the Pontifical States. Yet, still more pleasing to Us by far was the information contained in the same letter, by which We learn that numerous Indians within your Diocese have been lately brought to the Christian faith, while Catholicity advances in other parts of your jurisdiction. As regards the two Indian youths whom you wish to send to Rome that they may be instructed in sacred literature, We will receive them, Venerable Brother, with the greatest pleasure, and place them in Our College of the Propaganda. Furthermore, if there is anything else in which We can accommodate you, especially if it regards the utility of the flock entrusted to your care, or the increase of the faithful, know that We will readily do it in so far as We judge it prudent in the Lord. Meantime, as a pledge of this, We most affectionately impart Our apostolic benediction to yourself, Venerable Brother, and to all the clergy and faithful whom you so praiseworthy direct, with the heartfelt hope that it will prove a presage of heavenly blessings.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, on the fourteenth day of April, A. D., 1832, and in the second year of Our Pontificate.

POPE GREGORY XVI.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Translated from the original Latin given in *The Catholic Telegraph* of July 7, 1832.

From Canton Bishop Fenwick proceeded to Cleveland whence he sailed, in the first days of July, for Detroit. On his arrival in the old French town, he found the people in a state of alarm and consternation because of the cholera. The holy man did what he could to calm their fears during the short time he spent there. Thence he sailed for Sault Sainte Marie with the intention, it would seem, of first visiting a settlement of Indians on the eastern borders of Lake Superior, probably one of the missions attended by Father Mazzuchelli. But the zealous prelate soon found himself in the midst of death, and was himself smitten with the cholera. We cannot, however, do better than let him tell his own experiences. To Father Rese he writes:

MACKINAC, 18 July, 1832.

*My Dear Friend:—*

We experienced many sufferings and contradictions from Detroit to this place. Before we arrived at Fort Gratiot a soldier died of the cholera and was thrown into the water. The next day, three others were seized with the same sickness, one of whom was a Catholic and made his confession to me. These were landed and died there, with eight more. We were detained two days at Fort Gratiot. We arrived at Sault Sainte Marie on the fourteenth, but were not permitted to leave the boat—were held there in quarantine until the sixteenth. We debarqued here on the seventeenth at five A.M. While at Sault Sainte Marie, I was taken with chills and fever. The same thing occurred on the evening of the sixteenth. Yesterday I was indisposed all day. Today I feel pretty well. I flatter myself that this attack will pass away as did the former. The air and health on the island being good, the cholera is not feared here. Yet a soldier or so from the *Sheldon Thomson* have died here; fifteen died in Chicago. After two days more, if I am well enough, we will go to Arbre Croche, and from there to Green Bay. My plan is to engage one of the Redemptorist Fathers to go to Green Bay with one of the lay brothers, to have a second remain with Father Richard, and to place the third, with two brothers, near Detroit.

The officers of the Fort came to visit me today and invited me, very courteously, to go and see them. I shall do this tomorrow, Deo volente. There are two large schools at Arbre Croche—one at the old mission under the direction of good Widow De Moreal [?] and her daughter. That at Green Bay is filled and does well. Madame Fisher is devoted and constant at her post. Father Baraga has had three new chapels built at different points for the Indians, of whom he has instructed and baptized a large number. The box of effects for Fathers Mazzuchelli and Baraga has not yet arrived; neither has any word been received about it. You will please speak of this to Mr. Mason who sent it from Cincinnati. I hope that you have not lost either your courage or your health, and that all goes well with you and those under your care. I repeat the proposal made in my last in favor of Father Montgomery.

My compliments and blessing to all,

totus tuus in visceribus Christi.

EDWARD,

*Bishop of Cincinnati.*

P.S.—Tell Father Mullan that Mr. Ferry speaks only from time to time of the book that he is going to write, in order to justify himself and expose Mr. Mullan. I suppose Mr. Alexander of the Fort, on arriving in Cincinnati, told him all the other reports.<sup>18</sup>

Bishop Fenwick's ailment was more persistent than he seems to have anticipated, and the report of his condition was the cause of profound grief through all the diocese. Everywhere were prayers offered to God by Catholics for the recovery of their saintly chief pastor.

<sup>18</sup> Notre Dame Archives.—If we were to criticize Bishop Fenwick, it would be for having reposed too much faith and authority in Father Rese. Although, as stated before, Father Rese was brilliant, zealous and pious, at times he lacked judgment. Nor was he, we think, always as open-minded to the bishop as the bishop was to him. It seems certain that he sought, to some extent at least, to work himself in between the trustful prelate and the early friar missionaries, going so far at times as to interfere even with the discipline and affairs of their Order. This, quite naturally, caused a little friction. For these reasons, some of the documentary literature of the day cannot be taken at its face-value.

The brave prelate, however, soon mustered his remaining strength, and proceeded on a visitation to Sault Sainte Marie, Green Bay, Arbre Croche, and perhaps to some of the missions attended from that place, together with a settlement near the present city of Mackinaw.<sup>19</sup> In previous years, the tidings of the presence of their beloved "Great Father," as they affectionately called him, borne on the winds far and near never failed to bring the Indians from every direction. They might be seen gliding over lake and river in their frail canoes, or scurrying through the tangled forests, that they might receive his benediction. On this occasion, as the news of his enfeebled health had spread broadcast, one fancies, these simple children of the wilds gathered around the man of God in still greater numbers. At Arbre Croche, they swarmed down to the lake shore to meet his boat, and formed into two lines, the women on one side and the men on the other. As he landed, the braves fired three salvos with their flintlocks. Passing between the lines, the bishop, weak as he was, gave his hand to each of the Indians in token of fatherly affection. Then, followed in procession by his red-skinned flock, he went for a visit to the Eucharistic Lord in the little church. The Bishop, delighted with the work of Father Baraga at Arbre Croche, gave him some two hundred dollars for the publication of a catechism in the Ottawa dialect which he had just written.<sup>20</sup> This

<sup>19</sup> Father Rese, in his report of the bishop's death to the Association for the Propagation of the Faith (*Annales*, VI, 138), and Father Mazzuchelli (*Memoirs*, etc., p. 75) tell us that the bishop's illness prevented him from going to Green Bay on this tour. But a letter in the prelate's own hand which we shall presently lay before the reader, seems to say expressly that he did visit that place.

<sup>20</sup> Rev. Frederic Baraga to the Leopoldine Society (*HAMMER*, *op. cit.*, pp. 137 ff., and *VERWYST*, *Life of Right Rev. Frederic Baraga*, pp. 129-30). The other facts for this visit of the bishop to the north, unless noted in the



mission, however, was not an exception; for our prelate was deeply touched and much consoled by the love and candid faith manifested by the red men all along his route.

Having administered confirmation, preached and satisfied himself with the progress of religion in the places which he had visited, Bishop Fenwick returned to the island of Mackinac. Sickness had prevented him from giving due attention to the Church at that place on his first stay. There he was also much pleased with the zeal and labors of Father Mazzuchelli whose improvement in the English, French and Indian languages had greatly enlarged the usefulness of his ministry. He converted many among both the white people and the red. Arrangements were now made for a tour by the Milanese friar among the Winnebagos through the west as far as Prairie du Chien.

The way had been prepared for this missionary journey by the arrival from Austria of the six Redemptorists, three priests and three lay brothers, mentioned in the bishop's previous letter. These the prelate ordered to be sent to Michigan where there were many German immigrants, but apparently there was no priest conversant with their language. As they spoke French, they could look after Father Mazzuchelli's missions during his absence. Another source of consolation to the earnest bishop, at this time, was the news that additional clerical forces for the missions would soon arrive from Holland. These were Revs. Theodore J. Van den Broek, Adrian F. Van de Weyer and Louis Desseille. The two former were Dominicans. Father Des-

references, are taken from *The Catholic Telegraph* of July 14, August 18 and 25, and September 15 and 22, 1832.

seille seems to have taken the habit of the Order just before leaving for America, and to have been a novice under Father Van den Broek on the journey.<sup>21</sup> Possibly owing to his own sickness and the epidemic of cholera in the city, the bishop did not call the two seminarians of whom we have spoken, to Detroit for ordination. But they and others were either ready, or nearly ready, for the priesthood. Rev. Edward T. Collins had been ordained in Philadelphia on the first day of July. More missionaries were expected from abroad in the near future. This notable increase of clergy, together with the outlook for the Church under his jurisdiction, and his own state of health, there can be no doubt, determined Bishop Fenwick to make a final attempt to secure a coadjutor for himself, as well as an incumbent for the see of Detroit. Father Rese had shown opposition to the miter of Cincinnati; but he had manifested a love for the missions of the northwest. Accordingly, from Mackinac the bishop wrote to Rome asking for the appointment of his vicar general to Detroit and the nomination of Rev. Peter Kenny, S.J., as his own coadjutor. But of this we shall presently let the prelate speak for himself. At the same time, and through the same medium, he despatched the following letter to a friend in France.

<sup>21</sup> Rev. Joseph Passerat, C.S.S.R., to Father Rese, Vienna, March 5, 1832 (Cincinnati Archives); Rev. Simon Saenderl to Bishop Fenwick, New York, June 20, 1832 (Notre Dame Archives); Rev. T. J. Van den Broek, O.P., Ghent, to Rev. J. D. Ranken, O.P., Rotterdam, May 5, 1832 (copy in Archives of Saint Joseph's Province); letter of Father Van den Broek to a newspaper in Holland, in 1843 (given in *The Story of Father Van den Broek*, pp. 40 ff.).—Father van den Broek and his companions reached America in August, 1832. Father Desseille changed his mind about becoming a Dominican, and we soon find him on the missions in the northwest. Father Van den Broek also labored there as a Friar Preacher.

MACKINAC, August 12, 1832.

*My Dear Friend:*—I avail myself of a favorable opportunity offered me of again manifesting my friendship towards you, and of repeating the sentiments that I have so often expressed to you. It is the departure of Father Jeanjean, a priest who belongs to Louisiana, for Rome. I rarely receive any of your letters, or those from Lyons. This I attribute to the unreliable mail service.

My health is much deteriorated, and my strength decreases perceptibly. I have just visited the good Indians of Arbre Croche, where I have located an excellent missionary, Father Baraga, a priest from Dalmatia. I have also placed there a saintly woman of mature age who knows three languages, English, French and Indian. She is the mistress of the school for the Indian youth. The zealous missionary accomplishes wonders—has extended his missions to the Castor [or Beaver] Islands, and even beyond Lake Michigan. He has baptized two hundred and sixty-six Indians since he commenced his work there, May, 1831. I confirmed one hundred and thirty-seven of that tribe, and was much consoled by their great fervor and piety. In the parish of Saint Peter, Arbre Croche, there are now seven hundred Christian Indians, of whom the greater number have been confirmed, and two schools for grown Indians conducted by some good half-breed women under the supervision of the prudent, zealous and pious pastor. There is also a school, under the surveillance of Father [S.T.] Badin, on the Saint Joseph's River which flows into Lake Michigan; and still another at Green Bay, with a church almost completed.

In Ohio there are three schools conducted by pious women who do much good. My college is in operation. The seminary, now in course of construction, is of brick with a stone foundation. It will be surmounted by a splendid tower which will correspond with that of the cathedral on one side, and with that of the college on the other. . . .

I am, etc.,

EDWARD FENWICK,  
*Bishop of Cincinnati.*<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Annales*, VI, 197-98.

It was in the middle of August when Bishop Fenwick regained Detroit. Here he found his friend, venerable Father Richard, suffering from incipient cholera. But two of the Redemptorist priests, Revs. Simon Saenderl and Francis Xavier Hätscher, had arrived there with two lay brothers and begun to labor zealously among the terrified and stricken people as well on the neighboring missions as in the city itself. Two others, Rev. Francis Xavier Tschenhens and Brother James Koller, though it would seem rather against the bishop's instructions and wishes, had been detained in Cincinnati by the vicar general.<sup>23</sup> What with the zeal of his priests, his own impulse, the aid lately obtained from the Government in behalf of the Indians, and the assistance of the French and Austrian charitable societies, the friar prelate beheld new schools rising in the northwest, while the old were steadily on the increase. This was as balm to his pious soul; for he saw in these schools an effective antidote to the activities of Proteus-like sectarianism. It was another source of joy to Bishop Fenwick's heart, therefore, when he was informed by the elder Father Badin that Congress would likely set aside four sections of land for the education of the Indians under that missionary's charge. But the gladness that came from these good promises was lessened because of the gloom thrown over the land by the appalling epidemic of cholera. The pious prelate ordered a special prayer to be said in the mass that God might withdraw His chastising hand. Scarcely less zealous in the cause of Catholic education than in that of souls, our bishop sought at once to enlist the Redemptorists

<sup>23</sup> Rev. Simon Saenderl to the Leopoldine Society, Detroit, August 28, 1832 (HAMMER *op. cit.*, pp. 130 ff.); Rev. F. H. Hätscher to same, Detroit, September 27, 1832 (*ibid.*, pp. 134 ff.).



in this work. Through Father Saenderl, superior of the little band, he offered to the congregation a place of promise not far distant from Detroit. A religious himself, the prelate did not wish to interfere with the vocation of these fathers which supposes that they lead a community life. The mission which he offered them was not only adapted to that purpose, but conveniently located for their apostolic activities towards the north. There they could open a college, which he regarded as of prime necessity for Michigan's Church, when the expected addition to their numbers arrived from Europe. These propositions were accepted by Father Saenderl as suited to their vocation and fitting the purposes that had brought the fathers to America. The large-hearted bishop, Father Saenderl tells us, would have immediately given the money necessary for building the establishment, if he had had it. In his distress, he requested the superior to make this project known to the Leopoldine Society, and then to assume temporary charge of Green Bay and Father Mazzuchelli's other northern missions that this priest might be spared for a tour among the Indians farther west. Father Hätscher, it was agreed, should spend the winter in Detroit with Father Richard.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, the anxious prelate wrote to his metropolitan, the Most Rev. James Whitfield:

DETROIT, 22 August, 1832.

*Most Rev. and Dear Sir:*—I have returned thus far from the distant and laborious missions of the Rapids of St. Mary (Saut Ste. Marie), Mackinac, Arbre Croche and Green Bay; at each of which places much good has been done, and there remains yet much to be done. All these are Indian missions, extending to the head of Lake Superior, which I could not reach, being stopped in

<sup>24</sup> Letters of Fathers Saenderl and Hätscher as in the preceding note.

my progress by sickness. I was sick at Saut Ste. Marie and at Mackinac. Am yet feeble and languid. My strength and health have failed much. I am evidently sinking gradually to the grave, being now sixty-four years old. I was consoled with the progress of religion, and [with the] prosperity of my Indian schools at Mackinac, Arbre Croche, Green Bay, and St. Joseph's River in Michigan.<sup>25</sup> The amount of my good Indians baptized and civilized (most of them confirmed) at all these missions (collectively taken) is about fourteen or fifteen hundred. At Green Bay the Indian school contains between eighty and ninety pupils; at Arbre Croche upwards of one hundred; at St. Joseph's about sixty. This is an interesting portion of our flock and diocess. Indeed, I think it the most interesting and important. At all events, it is the most simple, innocent and humble and docile part. I have stationed a Priest at each of the above missions, except at that of Lake Superior and the Rapids of St. Mary.

In Ohio our prospects are also consoling. Religion and piety are on the increase in most parts of the State; conversions frequent. My business and labours increase, whilst my health and all my faculties seem to fail me. I therefore feel and see the propriety, and even necessity, of soliciting the common Father of the faithful to grant me a coadjutor who may be prepared to succeed me at my death, and carry on the works I have been entrusted with. I hope and request Your Grace will unite with me in that petition, and use your interest and intercession for me to the Court of Rome. Upon serious and frequent reflection on the subject, I find no one in America of my acquaintance so well qualified to succeed me in the See of Cincinnati as Rev. Mr. Kenny, the Provincial or Superior of the Jesuits of Maryland. I do not know his Christian name, or I should mention it. His talents, zeal and piety claim my fullest confidence, and I am persuaded he would not only secure the prosperity of my diocess [and] the confidence and satisfaction of all my clergy, but would much promote the cause of religion, the honor of God, and the prosperity

<sup>25</sup> The school at Mackinac was probably mixed, composed of both whites and reds. This also seems to have been the character of the schools at Monroe and in and around Detroit. As the bishop does not seem to have visited Saint Joseph's River up to this time, what he says here about its school was likely based on a report from the elder Father Badin.

even of his own Order (the Society of Jesus) by being placed at Cincinnati, as it would be a central point between the eastern and western provinces of that Society in the United States. His eloquence and learning and piety would no doubt command respect and confidence from all denominations, and contribute much to increase the flock of Christ in these western states.

If I can obtain his appointment for Cincinnati, I would then recommend Rev. Frederic Rese, my Vicar General, for the See of Detroit in Michigan, for which he is better qualified than for Cincinnati, being much attached to the Indian missions, and much esteemed by all the clergy and laity of Michigan, [and] well known to [the] Propaganda for his talents and zeal and piety and knowledge—of all which I could not say too much. But I could not deprive myself of him and his services without the ruin of my diocese and the destruction of my peace and life, unless Father Kenny is first appointed and associated to me.

Your Grace will please to weigh these subjects, and then communicate to the Holy Father and [the] Propaganda your opinion and concurrence with my petition, which I have sent to Rome by Rev. Mr. Jeanjean from New Orleans, having expressed myself in the above manner both to the Pope and to Cardinal Pedicini. You will please to favour me with an answer to this when you write to Rome. I shall not reach Cincinnati before October, as I intend to visit all the congregations of Ohio as far as Steubenville and New Lisbon to the east, and then south and west. I recommend myself to your good prayers and Holy Sacrifices. The cholera still rages here, has taken off to the grave fifty-six of this parish (St. Ann's). I have assisted two within twenty-four hours; both now dead. Rev. Mr. Richard is ill of same complaint, he thinks. I have had something of it, but feel now clear of it. I know not how long I shall be so.<sup>26</sup>

Ever more considerate of others than of self, Bishop Fenwick kept his vicar general informed of his whereabouts and intentions; but he said little of his health, doubtless not wishing to cause any sorrow or trouble.

<sup>26</sup> Baltimore Archives, Case 23, H 6.—The rest of this letter has been cut off, probably for the bishop's signature. But the missing portion could have contained little more than the subscription.

For this reason, the various rumors that reached Cincinnati, during the time of his absence, caused the city to oscillate between fear and joy. Although the holy prelate was anxious to visit all the Indian missions, and seems to have had time to do so between writing the above letter and arriving at Canton, we are not sure that he went to see and console the Pottawatomies on the Saint Joseph's River. Be this as it may, he soon retraced his steps towards Ohio. Tiffin and Norwalk were taken in on the way to Canton. By the time he reached there, he was so feeble and exhausted that fear was entertained for his life. Still he wrote at once to the editors of *The Catholic Telegraph* telling of the "rich spiritual repast" that he had enjoyed on his visit to the Catholics on the lakes, but especially among the Indians. As the apostolic man insisted, in spite of his health, on keeping his promise to confirm in the new brick church at Steubenville, Canton's pastor, Rev. J. M. Henni, accompanied him on this journey, leaving a Father van Dromme, who had lately come from Europe, in charge of the parish. From Steubenville, sick and weak though he was, the bishop proceeded to Pittsburgh on a matter of business, probably the completion of arrangements for a settlement of Colettines at Arbre Croche. Saint Paul's, Columbiana County, was next visited. Confirmation there was followed by the administration of the same sacrament at Canton. This seems to have been on Sunday, September 23, 1832, and was the holy apostle's last episcopal function.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *The Catholic Telegraph*, September 22, 1832; HAMMER, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-41 (quoting from a letter of Father Henni that appeared in a paper of Munich, in 1836); letter of Bishop Fenwick to Father Rese, June 30, 1832, as in note 15.—Father Henni's letter, as rendered by Hammer, would



All along his route, Father Rese informs us, Bishop Fenwick had told the people that they would see him no more. On his second visit at Canton he received a letter giving him the news of good Father Richard's death in Detroit, and remarked to Father Henni: "My son, I will soon follow him." On Tuesday he said his last mass and wrote two letters of instructions to his vicar general. At noon he started for Wooster which he wished to visit on his way to Saint Luke's, Saint Joseph's and the churches in that vicinity, ending his long, laborious apostolic tour at Cincinnati.<sup>28</sup>

But God had decreed that the good bishop should not again see his beloved episcopal city. He had been unwell through all his journey. On leaving Canton he complained of being weak and dizzy. Nor had he proceeded far on the way when he was taken violently ill with the cholera. At times, his suffering was so great that he stood upright in the stage-coach. He arrived at the Coulter Hotel, Wooster, at sunset, took a cup of tea and went to bed. The people in the hotel feared to go near the sick prelate. Fortunately, a Catholic lady, Miss Eliza Rose Powell, had travelled in the same conveyance from Canton. Through her, Doctors Stephen F. Day and Samuel N. Bissell were summoned to the bedside of the stricken apostle, while a messenger was despatched for Father Henni at Canton.<sup>29</sup> The bishop

make the confirmation at Canton take place on September 16; but other documents and circumstances seem to show this to be a slip of the memory or a typographical error.

<sup>28</sup> Father Rese to the Association for the Propagation of the Faith (*Annales*, VI, 139); HAMMER (*op. cit.*, as in the preceding note); *The Catholic Telegraph*, October 6, 1832.

<sup>29</sup> Miss Powell, writing from the Coulter Hotel, gives the names of the two doctors as "Colter" and Bissell (*The Catholic Telegraph*, October 6, 1832). Douglass (*History of Wayne County, from the Days of the First Settlers and Pioneers to the Present*, pp. 566-67) tells us that they were

himself gave orders that the priest should be instructed to bring the Blessed Sacrament and holy oils. Although they had despaired of the saintly man's recovery by eleven o'clock, the two physicians worked over his prostrate form until after sunrise in the vain hope that he might rally. With them were Miss Powell and a negro man who took turns with the doctors in their efforts to allay the bishop's tortures by massages, applications and sedatives. In the morning, he lapsed into a state of lethargy from which he could be aroused only with great difficulty. On one of these occasions he said: "Come, let us go to Calvary!", words that reveal the thoughts which were ever uppermost in his pious mind. On another, it is stated, he declared that he had nothing further to do with the affairs of this world. While the man of God lay thus on his bed of pain, the landlady of the Coulter came to the sick-room. As she looked at the prostrate form, she remarked, doubtless in heartfelt pity: "He has administered to many; but there is no one to administer to him now." So it was to be. At the noon hour, Wednesday, September 26, 1832, Right Rev. Edward Dominic Fenwick, Ohio's apostle, breathed forth his pure and noble soul to God. Owing to fear of the cholera, of which he died, he was buried at once. Father John M. Henni arrived from Canton later in the day, but saw only the little mound that covered the mortal remains of the great Friar Preacher, missionary and bishop.<sup>30</sup>

Doctors Day and Bissell. As we did not find any mention of a physician by the name of Coulter through all this history, we concluded that Miss Powell, in the excitement of the moment, likely confused the name of the hotel with that of one of the doctors in attendance.

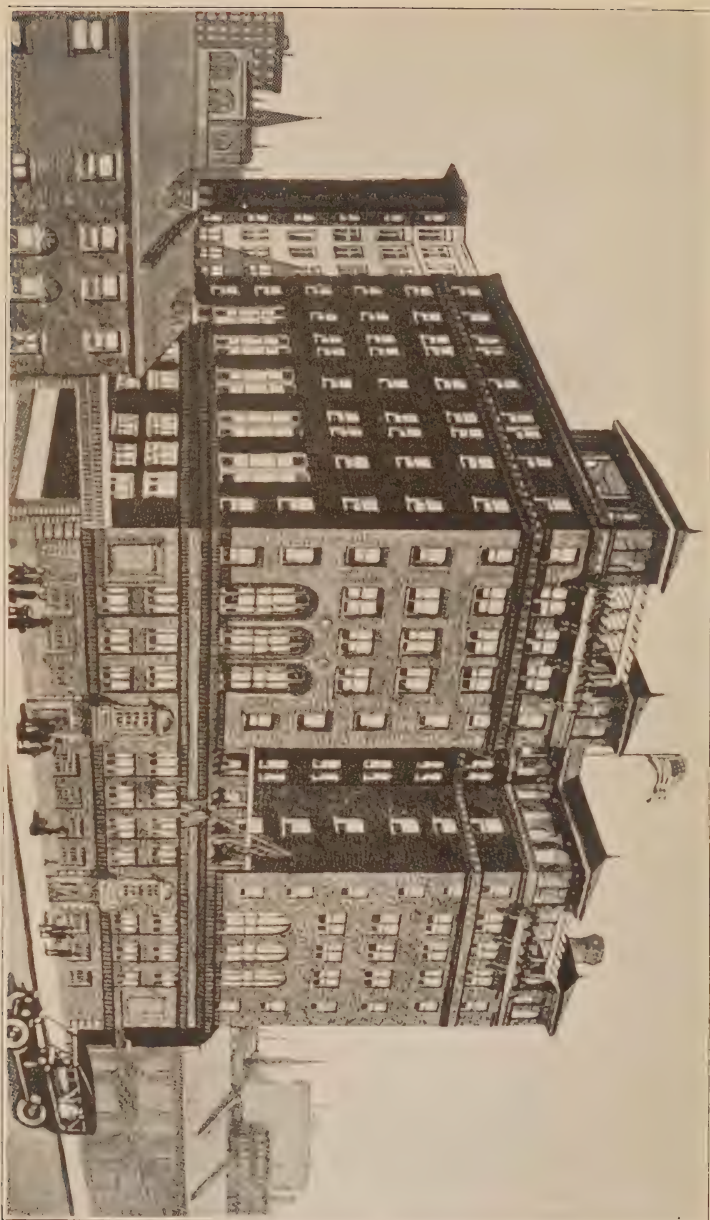
<sup>30</sup> Eliza Rose Powell to Father Rese, Wooster, September 26, and Father Henni to same, Wooster, September 27, 1832 (*The Catholic Telegraph*, October 6, 1832); DOUGLASS, as in the preceding note.

The last journey and the death of our apostolic prelate recall the words of Bishop Spalding: "The white mantle of St. Dominic had appeared in the midst of many a dreary wilderness, which it had been the means of converting into a blooming garden of Christian civilization. Clad in this emblem of purity, the sons of St. Dominic had tamed the fierceness of the savage, had enlightened his understanding, and had moved his heart to embrace the religion of Christ."<sup>31</sup> All this had Bishop Fenwick accomplished, clad in the same "white mantle" and "emblem of purity"; for he wore the habit after his consecration. Often a return to their convents to die surrounded by their brethren was not granted those fearless apostles of the faith of whom Doctor Spalding speaks. Alone, or with strangers—far from home, friends and country—they slept the sleep of peace and were laid in lonely graves. A glorious crowning of noble labors. The bishop's crown was not unlike theirs. Like Saint Francis Xavier, with whom he has been compared and for whom he had a tender love, he died unattended—without the sacraments and consolations of the Church. We believe that, as Saint Francis, he needed them not. The Queen of the angels, for whom he ever had a lively devotion, was his comforter. Brave soldier of Christ, he was smitten in battle and died on the field. He lived with God and for God. God, therefore, we may believe was his shrift, his chrism and his viaticum.

<sup>31</sup> SPALDING, *Sketches of the Early Catholic Missions in Kentucky*, p. 149. —The Coulter Hotel, or Tavern, Wooster, in which Bishop Fenwick died, as we learned on a visit to that city in the summer of 1919, stood on the north side of the present West Liberty Street almost midway between the Public Square and Walnut Street.







THE FENWICK CLUB, NAMED AFTER OHIO'S APOSTLE

## CHAPTER XXIV

### A FINAL WORD

ALMOST from the time he was allowed to surrender the reins of authority over the little province of Friars Preacher he had founded, into the hands of his friend, Rev. S. T. Wilson, Father Fenwick gave himself up exclusively to missionary labors. His appointment to our American hierarchy made no change in his life other than an addition of cares and burdens. The last two years of his earthly sojourn, if we take into consideration his age, his state of health (at this time he was almost continually ill and suffering), and his weak constitution, have few parallels in the annals of our American ecclesiastical history. During this period, in spite of debility and sickness, the apostolic prelate travelled perhaps six thousand miles, on horseback, by stage-coach or by boat, in the cause of his diocese and in quest of souls. From June 14 to September 26 (the day of his death), 1832, he traversed more than two thousand miles.<sup>1</sup> On this his last journey (for he was in an almost dying condition from the outset), the Christ-like man was borne up through trial upon trial solely by will-power, zeal and love of the God whose kingdom on earth he sought to promote. It was as the way to Calvary.

Nor had Bishop Fenwick's labors been in vain. He builded well, laid broad and deep the foundations of Catholicity in that part of the Lord's vineyard which

<sup>1</sup> Father Rese to the Association for the Propagation of the Faith (*Annales*, VI, 138).

had been entrusted to his care, and prepared the way for those who were to come after him in what is today one of the fairest portions of our American Church. If possible, in building a house of prayer for his people, he also secured ground for a school so that, when the parish should be able to support it, the little ones of Christ might have the blessings of a Catholic education, a circumstance which shows his good judgment and keen foresight. But we cannot do better, in this connection, than quote Father Rese, one of the diocese's vicars general, whose words show at once Bishop Fenwick's spirit of humility and obedience, no less than the fruits of his ministry.<sup>2</sup> Having given an outline of the prelate's earlier life, Father Rese proceeds to say:

As soon as he was informed of the arrival of the bulls from Rome, he buried himself in his missions, fancying thus to avoid a burden which he believed himself unable to bear. He could not, however, escape the pursuit of his superior who, by threats of excommunication, obliged him to submit to consecration. There were only two priests in the diocese at the time of its erection; and these were destitute of all resources. When I consider its present situation and the increase of churches, convents and other ecclesiastical institutions, together with the growth of the faithful and the multiplication of priests, I cannot sufficiently admire the wonders accomplished by the power of the Most High. The new bishop who, in entering on his evangelical labors, found but a few Catholics scattered here and there and only two priests, had the consolation, before his death, of seeing the number of the former run up to forty thousand, as well as of counting thirty zealous co-laborers, in this vineyard of the Lord which, as if by enchantment, has sprung up from nothingness.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Owing to the needs of the missions and the slow mails, Bishop Fenwick always had two vicars for Ohio, besides Father Richard in Michigan. Father N. D. Young was the other vicar general in Ohio at the time of the bishop's death.

<sup>3</sup> Letter of Father Rese as in note 1 (*Annales*, VI, 136).—Father Fenwick was certainly obliged to accept the miter through obedience, but we

Although our book, perhaps not without profit to the reader and to history, might be extended to greater length, with the above brief, crisp outline of Bishop Fenwick's labors, we bring his life to a close. Sufficient has been said, it seems to us, to make the name of Ohio's apostle shine with luster among those of our hierarchy who have labored with notable success in the American Church. It only remains, therefore, to lay before the reader some of the appreciations that appeared in the press of that day, as well secular as Catholic, together with expressions of esteem and affection from the pens of ecclesiastics who knew him only to love and admire, if not to revere him. *The Catholic Telegraph* of October 6, 1832, for instance, thus explains its dress of mourning:

The sable appearance of our sheet but imperfectly indicates the grief which fills our hearts. Our venerated and beloved do not think that he received any threat of excommunication. It is worthy of note that about the time of Bishop Fenwick's death there arrived in Cincinnati a letter from Cardinal Pedicini announcing that the two Indian youths who had been sent to the Propaganda College, had reached Rome.

It reads:

"TO THE RIGHT REV. EDWARD FENWICK, BISHOP OF CINCINNATI:

*Right Rev. Sir:*—It will be very agreeable to Your Lordship to learn from me that the two Indian young men, William Maccadobinese [Maccatebinessi] and Augustine Hamelin, have happily arrived at Rome, and have been accepted as students in the College of the Propaganda. To increase your joy, I will also add that the Holy Father received them with that large-heartedness for which he is distinguished, and exhorted them eagerly to pursue their studies. I will state, furthermore, that these two young men display talents and manifest a desire to propagate religion among their people which gives great hope that they will become very efficient priests. Meanwhile, I pray God to preserve Your Lordship well and happy.

"Your devoted brother,

"C. M. CARDINAL PEDICINI, *Prefect*.

"C. CASTRACANE, *Secretary*.

"College of the Propaganda, Rome, 28 July, 1832" (Translation from the Latin in *The Catholic Telegraph*, October 6, 1832).

Maccatebinessi (Blackbird) died in Rome, June 25, 1833. Hamelin afterwards gave up his studies and returned to Michigan. The two Indian novices at Saint Rose's in Kentucky, likewise failed to persevere.



Bishop has gone to reap the reward of his labors and toils, leaving us the memory of his worth, the example of his virtues, and the odor of his sanctity. He is dead! Edward Fenwick is no more.

Where is he whose approving smile was ever ready to cheer us? whose sympathetic heart shared our griefs, and the counsels of whose wisdom was a lamp to our footsteps? Where is he whom we were accustomed to behold at the altar of his God; in the habitation of want and wretchedness; by the bedside of disease and pain; or in the rude cabin of the simple native of the forest, on the errand of mercy and the work of benediction? Alas! those benignant features are stiffened in the rigidity of death; that heart beats no more to human hope, or joy, or feeling; that light is extinguished; and the dark, cold clods of the valley are heaped above that majestic and venerated form!

In the poignancy of the present affliction, our only solace is in the consoling hope that his removal is only to an entrance on the happiness of the beatific vision of his God, in those abodes towards which his longing desires were ever directed, and where all his treasures were. This occasion and our own feelings will neither justify nor permit us now and here to dwell at length on his character and virtues—they are themes which hereafter, through our pilgrimage, we shall recall with delight and gratefully perpend. . . .

The same paper devotes nearly four columns of another issue (January 12, 1833) to a sketch of its founder. But as we have referred to this article more than once in the course of these pages, suffice it here to reproduce the following sentences which so well illustrate Bishop Fenwick's character.

A bull [letters patent from the Order's General] was received from Rome constituting Father Fenwick Provincial of the Order in North America. He could not, however, resolve upon accepting the dignity, fearing it might prevent the conversion of souls to God. A remarkable circumstance which has always been looked upon as the most certain evidence of the exalted virtue of

Father Fenwick, is that, after having obtained from Rome the institution of the office of Provincial for Father Wilson, with the permission to annul it should he himself choose to remain Provincial, or to abdicate it, he did not hesitate a moment to transmit it to Father Wilson, because he thought it much better to obey than to command.

*The Truth Teller* (October 6, 1832), speaking of the bishop's death, says:

We have seen with regret that this truly respectable Prelate died on the 25th [26th] ult., at Canton, of the prevailing epidemic. His death will be severely felt by his people, whom he did not abandon in the hour of trial and danger, and to whom he has always been a fond Father in God. Doctor Fenwick was an accomplished Ecclesiastic. His was a life of charity and zeal; to the poor he was a benefactor, to the orphan a father. Assiduous in the occupations of his calling, he was not wanting in the civilities of life, but happily combined the Gentleman with the Priest. The memory of such a Prelate will be in benediction.

So again, in the splendid paper conducted by the illustrious Bishop England, *The United States Catholic Miscellany*, we read of Cincinnati's first ordinary:

If the Hero that gains a victory over the enemies of his country, when he is about to expire, can calmly breathe his last reposing on the Standard he has bravely defended, what tranquillity of mind, what animating hopes, what cheering anticipations must await the Christian Warrior who, having overcome his spiritual enemies, is summoned from all earthly warfare to receive his reward "in another and better world." The unexpected and lamented death of the Bishop of Ohio, removed as he has been in the midst of his usefulness and the faithful discharge of his pastoral office, casts a gloom over the scenes of his zealous, unwearied and assiduous labours. For such a loss we feel that we have cause of sorrow. For the loss of such a Pastor, so kind, so solicitous, so affectionate, and so ever ready to dispense all things necessary for the welfare of his people, his bereaved flock have

indeed abundant cause to mourn. He is gone from them on earth forever!

“’Tis done, and now he’s happy. The glad soul  
Has not a wish uncrown’d.”

His persevering eloquence and amiable deportment gained him many admirers, and many personal friends. As a Herald of the Cross he was always at his post, faithful, vigilant, and sincere. In the ordinary walks of life he was dignified, affable, unostentatious and interesting. In his retirement he was prayerful. If the death of Addison was calculated to exhibit how a Christian could die, the life of Bishop Fenwick may be adduced to show how a Christian ought to live.—“*Come! let us go to Calvary,*” were the last words he distinctly uttered. Impressive exclamation! that evidenced in his dying moments the stability of his unshaken Faith, and the pious longings of his immortal soul. He may truly be said to have fallen in the performance of his duties, on his way homeward, after a long and laborious visitation to the remote parts of his diocese. “His spirit has returned to God who gave it.” “He is gathered to his people.”<sup>4</sup>

Nor must we omit the brief, but beautiful, notice of the bishop’s death that appeared in *The Shepherd of the Valley*, October 13, 1832. The heavy black lines on the second and third pages of that issue indicate Bishop Rosati’s sorrow over the loss of his cherished friend. *The Shepherd* tells its readers:

Most afflicting news has been communicated by the last mail. The Right Rev. EDWARD FENWICK, Bishop of Cincinnati, was, while visiting his flock, attacked by the cholera, on the 26th of September, and terminated a life of exemplary virtue and most useful labor, at Wooster, Ohio; which place he had reached on his return to Cincinnati, from his mission of zeal and charity.

The next issue of the same journal tells us that on October 13, Doctor Rosati sang pontifical mass in his cathedral for the “much lamented Bishop of Cincinnati,

<sup>4</sup> *U. S. Catholic Miscellany*, October 27, 1832.

at which all the clergy of the city and of St. Louis College," now the university of the same name, were present. *The United States Catholic Press*, Hartford, Connecticut, on the 25th of the same month, gave nearly two columns, largely copied from other papers, to the zeal, character and death of the deceased prelate. Thus did our Catholic journals sing the praises of Ohio's apostle. His life and virtues had attracted the attention of the secular press also. *The Cincinnati Gazette*, for instance, though little favorable to Catholicity, says of him:

On the 26th of September, Bishop Fenwick, of the Catholic Church of this city, died at Wooster, Ohio. He was a model of pious and unobtrusive Christian zeal and simplicity of manners. To the church here his death is a most serious calamity. For more than a quarter of a century, he has been an indefatigable missionary in the West, living as he died, without reproach. However other Christian churches may regard the Catholic church, every good man might exclaim, in regard to his death: "Oh, that I may die the death of the righteous, and that my last end may be like his."<sup>5</sup>

*The Baltimore Gazette*, October 10, 1832, which is followed by *The National Intelligencer*, Washington, D. C., on the fifteenth of the same month, devotes considerable space to a notice of the holy man. It quotes at length from both *The Catholic Telegraph* and *The Cincinnati Gazette*, closing its article with these lines: "Dr. Fenwick was a native of Maryland, and was very extensively connected with many of our oldest and most influential citizens, by whom, as by all who knew him, his virtuous and amiable deportment through life was highly and justly appreciated. His death will be sincerely lamented, and his memory fervently and sacredly cherished."

<sup>5</sup> Issue of October 3, 1832.



Father Frederic Rese could not speak of Cincinnati's apostolic prelate in terms other than those of affection and highest praise. In his letter to the Association for the Propagation of the Faith announcing the death of the bishop, for instance, he says: "Never have I esteemed and loved any one so much as I did Bishop Fenwick, for a better or more holy man could not be found than he was. His death, therefore, brought me deep grief and caused me to shed many tears." In a later letter to the editor of the *Annales* (December 24, 1832) the same missionary writes again: "Let us thank God, nevertheless, with all our heart for the great good that has been accomplished everywhere. This is due in large part to the continual care and fervent prayers of our holy Bishop. *Opera ejus sequuntur illum* [His works follow him]."<sup>6</sup>

Rev. Frederic Baraga, not only a holy and zealous priest, but also one of the ornaments in our hierarchical crown, compares Cincinnati's friar prelate to Saint Francis de Sales. In the letter to the Leopoldine Society from which we have quoted in a previous chapter, the Dalmatian missionary says: "I cannot describe the sentiments that filled my heart as I arrived in Cincinnati, and thus reached the goal of my journey, the field of my future labors and the residence of the saintly Apostle of Ohio. The accounts that I had read had given me an exalted idea of the piety, amiableness and humility of the Right Rev. Bishop Edward Fenwick; but his mere presence soon showed me how inadequate had been my estimate of his virtues. One could not imagine a more humble, more amiable, or more pious man, or a more zealous shepherd than this prelate. . . ."

<sup>6</sup> *Annales*, VI, pp. 139 and 202.

Father Baraga says many beautiful things about Bishop Fenwick in this and other letters; while Rev. Simon Saenderl, C.S.S.R., speaks in a similar strain, though at less length in another communication to the Leopoldine Society to which we have also referred.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, we everywhere read that our prelate's piety and zeal were an inspiration to those with whom he came into contact, and that his presence was always as a ray of sunshine. We cannot refrain from borrowing Rev. Chrysostom Verwyst's translation of a letter of Father Baraga to the directors of the same society. It is dated, Detroit, October 10, 1832, and reads thus:

With most profound sorrow I inform your Reverend Board of Directors that our Right Rev. and dear Bishop, Edward Fenwick, died of the cholera on the 26th of September (1832), at noon. He always lived as a zealous missionary in holy poverty, and he also died on a missionary tour, like St. Francis Xavier, poor and abandoned. He was just on his way returning from a mission and visitation-tour, such as he used to undertake annually to the great spiritual benefit of his diocese, when all of a sudden he was seized with terrible cramps. He was obliged to get out of the wagon and entered the house of a Catholic family.<sup>8</sup> The nearest priest was immediately sent for, but he lived thirty miles away. When the priest arrived, our dear Bishop was already dead and buried. Thus this apostolic man departed this life without the help of a priest; for in order not to deprive a congregation of its pastor, he generally traveled alone, without a priest accompanying him. However, the angels and the Queen of the angels, towards whom he had all his lifetime cherished a very fervent and tender devotion, no doubt assisted him in his dying hour. And, although his mortal remains were buried without a priest being present to bless them, his beautiful soul was no doubt conducted by the angels before the face of our Lord, to whom he had devoted his whole life. No grand monument tells posterity

<sup>7</sup> HAMMER, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-07, and 130 ff.; VERWYST, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

<sup>8</sup> Father Baraga was misinformed on this point. The bishop died at the Coulter Hotel.

that here rest the mortal remains of the Apostle of Ohio, but he erected to himself thousands of standing monuments in the hearts of all those whom he had brought to the knowledge of God through his wonderful zeal and pious prayers. May he rest in peace and light eternal shine upon him.<sup>9</sup>

To Father Rese Rev. Benjamin Young, S.J., writes:

NEWTOWN, ST. MARY'S COUNTY, MD.,

20 October, 1832.

*Very Rev. Father Rese:*

I received your favor on October 15th (and on the very same day a letter from my brother at Somerset) giving me the sad, sad news of the death of my deeply beloved Uncle Edward of Cincinnati. May the holy will of God be done! Yet I cannot but agree with you that religion in those western countries has indeed sustained a very great loss in the death of a most zealous and virtuous Prelate—a man who certainly deserves to be called the religious hero and the apostle of Ohio and Kentucky, as he was the first to sow the seeds of our holy religion in those wild forests wherein they had been so long suffocated by the enemy. Let us then mourn together the loss of one so dear to you, but most dear to me because of near blood relationship, as well as other reasons. I will willingly join my prayers with yours that God may deign to give you another Bishop possessed of an amiability and endowed with a zeal and piety equal to those of the deceased Prelate. I am sorry that my distance from Washington (for I now live on the mission at St. Mary's County) does not permit me to comply with your earnest request in regard to the desired biographical sketch.

Sincerely thanking you, Very Rev. Sir, for your consideration of me, and recommending myself to your fervent prayers, I am, with much esteem and respect,

your most humble and obedient servant,

BENJAMIN A. YOUNG.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> VERWYST, *op. cit.*, pp. 130–31.

<sup>10</sup> Diocesan Archives of Cincinnati. Although Father Fenwick did truly apostolic work in Kentucky, and was among the early missionaries there, it is not true to say that he was the first to sow the seeds of Catholic truth in the state; neither can he be called the apostle of Kentucky. That honor belongs to Rev. S. T. Badin.

The Catholics of Cincinnati could not rest content to leave the body of their saintly and beloved bishop in its distant and lonely grave. A few months after his demise, John White, one of the prelate's converts, likely deputed for that purpose, went to Wooster, Ohio, had the remains unearthed and brought them home, in spite of the difficulties of distance, bad roads and wintry weather. On February 11, 1833, the solemn dirge of the requiem was sung in Saint Peter's by the priests and seminarians. Sorrowing hearts were at the mass to pray for the soul of our prelate and to bid him their last farewell. The apostle was then laid to rest beneath the cathedral which he had erected to the glory of God.<sup>11</sup>

The Right Rev. John B. Purcell, Bishop Fenwick's illustrious successor, arrived in his episcopal city, November 14, 1833. A twelvemonth later, Doctor Purcell issued his first pastoral letter which was largely devoted to the character, virtues and labors of the friar prelate who had preceded him. In this we read of Bishop Fenwick:

Distinguished piety, profound humility, primitive simplicity, gentleness of manners, unblemished integrity, devotion to his duty, and a love for his flock, from which none of his spiritual children were excluded, these were the virtues which formed the groundwork of the character of that amiable Prelate—these were the sublime endowments of that "Hidden man of the heart, who in the incorruptibility of a quiet and meek spirit, was rich in the sight of God" (Peter, III, 4). Called by a special providence to cherish and feed the lamp of Faith, borne to the Indians of the forest by the earliest Missionaries, and to proclaim the glad tidings of redemption to the first settlers of the state, for which the "lines had fallen in pleasant places," and for which was destined, at no distant period, a distinguished rank among her sisters, he fulfilled in a truly apostolic spirit, the ministry of the

<sup>11</sup> *The Catholic Telegraph*, February 16, 1833.



word which he received from the Lord Jesus. In the patient endurance of privations and hardships consequent on such a mission, and of which no adequate idea could now be formed, he well deserved the eulogy which God himself pronounced in Jeremiah—2nd chap., 2nd verse—: “Thus saith the Lord: I have remembered thee, pitying thy youth, (the first fruits of his ministry), and the love of thy espousals, when thou followedst in the *desert*, in a land that is not sown.” Appointed Bishop of a Diocese which his arduous toils had so eminently contributed to form in the wilderness, his heart yearned with a paternal feeling to procure an increase of resources of spiritual instruction for the children he had begotten for the Gospel, and who were seen on every side extending their hands and entreating for the bread of life. With lively gratitude to Almighty God have we been permitted to witness, and had the occasion to admire the singleness of purpose, the zeal, the earnestness and the success with which he pleaded before the wealthy and liberal of other climes, the cause thus dear to his heart, and involving so many of the highest interests of civilization, and of true Religion. Favored, in later years, with his presence on our retired Mountain where he never failed to visit and encourage those who were laboring for the same glorious cause to which his own life was devoted, we can bear testimony to the solicitude he felt, the fervent prayers he addressed to the Prince of Pastors, that he would vouchsafe to send men according to his own heart to aid in the establishment of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, in the vast region confided to his spiritual care. Then too, did we listen with delight to the accounts of the success with which heaven had blessed his labors, and dwell with rapture on his recitals of the solemnities of the Fete-Dieu and other festivals at L’Arbre Croche and Mackinaw. Unconscious at the time how nearly such recitals concerned us—how soon our estimable Predecessor should cease to preside otherwise than by the perpetual memorial of his virtues, the influence of his example and the efficacy of his prayers, and bequeath to us the legacy of his care, solicitude and love for the Church he governed, we cannot but admire the mysterious ways of God who never calls to his Divine service, without placing his spirit in

those whom he chooses as the humble executors of his mercy on the children of men. . . .<sup>12</sup>

Nor must we omit the estimate formed of our friar prelate by the well-known Mrs. Frances Trollope. It is another proof of the impression which his zeal, manners and deportment made upon even the most biassed. This English non-Catholic lady was in the United States about four years. Three of these were spent in Cincinnati, and during this time doubtless she often saw the holy man engaged in his apostolic work. Indeed, if we may judge from her famous *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, Bishop Fenwick was one of the few men she met in the country whom she considered as polished gentlemen. Speaking of religious factions and vagaries in America, Mrs. Trollope says:

The Roman Catholics alone appear exempt from the fury of division and sub-division that has seized every other persuasion. Having the Pope for their common head regulates, I presume, their movements, and prevents the outrageous display of individual whim, which every other sect is permitted. I had the pleasure of being introduced to the Roman Catholic bishop of Cincinnati [Doctor Fenwick], and have never known in any country a priest of a character and bearing more truly apostolic. He was an American, but I should never have discovered it from his pronunciation or manner. He received his education partly in England, and partly in France. His manners were highly polished; his piety active and sincere, and infinitely more mild and tolerant than that of the factious sectarians who form the great majority of the American priesthood.<sup>13</sup>

Bishop Fenwick had tried more than once to secure the assistance of Jesuit Fathers in his diocese. His successor soon turned his thoughts in the same direction.

<sup>12</sup> *The Catholic Telegraph*, December 6, 1834.

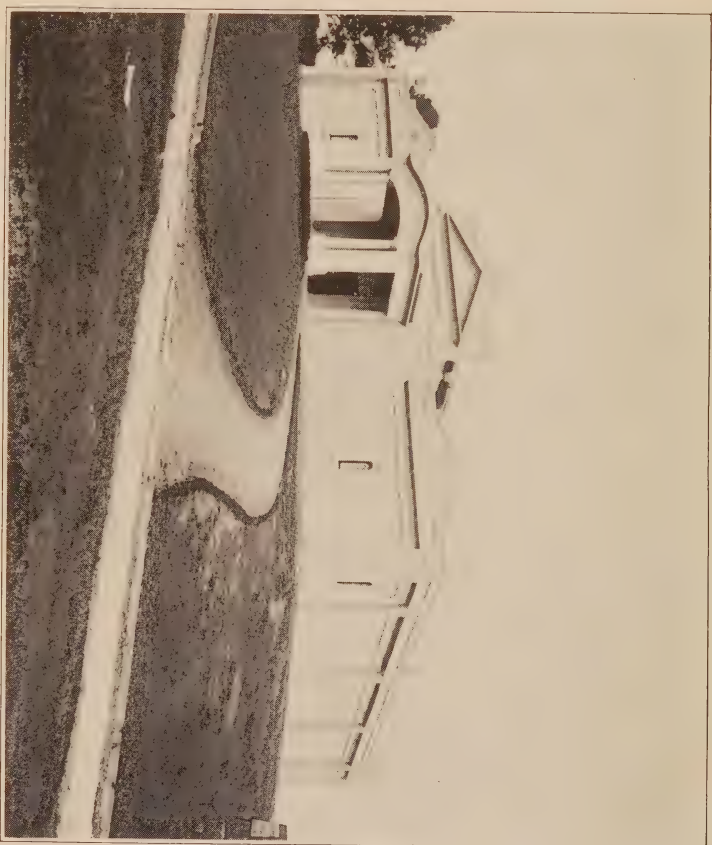
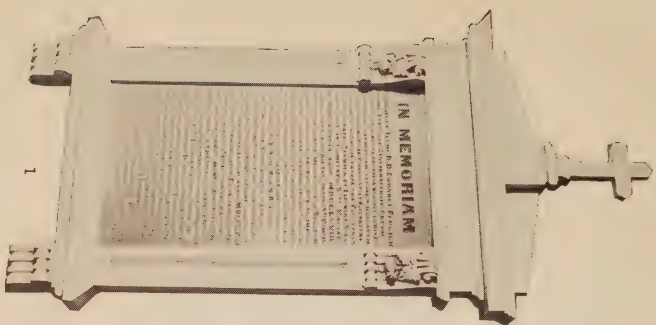
<sup>13</sup> TROLLOPE, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, pp. 83-84.

Accordingly, in 1840, the Athenaeum was bestowed upon the Society of Jesus, and it opened the fall term under the name of Saint Francis Xavier's College. Bishop Purcell now began preparations for a new cathedral on Eighth and Plum streets. It was dedicated in November, 1845. But as it was felt that the chief church of the diocese should be blessed with the relics of its first chief pastor, it was determined to transfer the body of the friar prelate from the old cathedral to the new.

This ceremony was carried out with the pomp and splendor with which Doctor Purcell was so happy in clothing ecclesiastical events. Saint Francis' Church (the former Saint Peter's) on Sycamore Street was draped in black. There practically all the clergy of the city and a large body of the Catholic laity gathered on Monday morning, March 13, 1848. The honored remains of Ohio's apostle had been taken from the vault in which they had lain for fifteen years, and placed in a new casket. The favor of bearing the treasured relics to their new place of rest was bestowed upon Messrs. James Moreland, Richard Slevin, John Rossiter and Jerome Hackett, former friends of the friar prelate. All then formed in line and the procession, headed by the cross-bearer and acolytes, marched through the streets of Cincinnati for a distance of a mile or more. Bishop Purcell was dressed in black pontificals, while his assistants wore cope or dalmatics of the same color. These preceded the coffin. Immediately after came church societies of Cincinnati and Covington. On the way, the priests chanted appropriate psalms or intoned the solemn *De Profundis*, while the cortège moved reverently and devoutly along the thoroughfares amidst







1. THE SLAB THAT LONG MARKED BISHOP FENWICK'S RESTING-PLACE. 2. THE MAUSOLEUM IN WHICH BISHOP FENWICK IS NOW BURIED

the earnest psalmody. It was an inspiring event that made a deep and lasting impression on the throng of spectators. Indeed, the ceremonies recall those carried out at the translation of the relics of a saint in Catholic countries.

When the procession reached the new cathedral, the casket was placed in the sanctuary. Bishop Purcell sang a solemn requiem, at which Revs. John Blox, S.J., and Clement Hammer were respectively deacon and subdeacon. Rev. N. D. Young, O.P., co-apostle of Ohio and nephew of the deceased prelate, acted as arch-priest. After the mass, Bishop Purcell preached an eloquent sermon in which, we are told, he detailed at length to an enraptured audience the life, character, virtues and labors of his predecessor, to whom he applied the beautiful description of the high priest Simon given in the fiftieth chapter of Ecclesiasticus. The honored remains of the friar prelate were then lowered into the crypt that had been prepared for them under the high altar.<sup>14</sup> Later, April 19, 1853, Rev. S. T. Badin died in Cincinnati, and his remains were laid in the same crypt across from those of Bishop Fenwick. Some years afterwards, the marble slab of which we give a picture, was erected and long marked the resting-place of the two faithful co-laborers in the cause of Christ.

Bishop Fenwick [writes Father Hammer in his brief, but pretty life of the friar prelate] has full right to the title which a grateful posterity has bestowed upon him, "Apostle of Ohio." Greater than the difficulties that stood in his way, was the spirit with which he set about fulfilling the injunction of his divine Master: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations." With the same fatherly love did he serve all the various nationalities represented in his large diocese; and thus, although his episcopate was

<sup>14</sup> *The Catholic Telegraph*, March 16, 1848.

short, did he effect everlasting good for the salvation of souls. To his diocese, indeed to the whole Church, he has left an example of zeal and fidelity to trust which recalls the spirit of self-sacrifice manifested by the first preachers of the Gospel.

Quietly and unostentatiously, his generosity, which was limited only by his poverty, diffused itself as the dew of heaven. Such as were not in need of temporal aid, profited by his counsel; while the weight of his authority, learning and character moved even the proudest to submit to him. He loved the land of his birth. May our Americans never forget his sacrifices for the conversion of the pioneers in the country, or to make them better citizens by inducing them to be good Christians. In Bishop Fenwick religion appeared in its most attractive and pleasing form. As is shown by the oft-quoted examples of conversions in these pages, he won for Catholicity the respect even of those not of the fold. The educated of all professions and persuasions saw that he was "the pattern of the flock from the heart."<sup>15</sup>

The crypt of the cathedral on Eighth and Plum streets, however, was not to be the last resting-place of Bishop Fenwick. A few years ago, the present metropolitan of Cincinnati, Most Rev. Henry Moeller, had a splendid mausoleum, with a compartment for the hierarchy, erected in Saint Joseph's Cemetery on Price Hill. Thursday, March 23, 1916, the honored remains of our friar prelate, together with those of the late saintly Archbishop Elder, were transferred to a special vault in this mansion of the dead.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, Rev. Charles E. Baden had conceived the idea of founding a Catholic Young Men's Home in Cincinnati, and set about its accomplishment with the hearty approval and under the fatherly direction of Archbishop Moeller. With time the noble scheme grew in proportions until it embraced not only a domicile for the Catholic young men of the city without an abode of

<sup>15</sup> HAMMER, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

<sup>16</sup> *The Catholic Telegraph*, March 30, 1916.

their own, but a Catholic club for the metropolis, and a retreat for homeless boys. The result was the erection of the present magnificent building on Pioneer Street, near Broadway. This splendid structure was dedicated on April 28, 1918, under the name of The Fenwick Club and The Boys' Home to give it a suitable patron and, as we learn from the prospectus of 1916, "to perpetuate the memory of Right Rev. Edward D. Fenwick, the first Bishop of Cincinnati, Ohio." Before the commencement of the edifice, Rev. Francis J. Heiermann, then president of Saint Francis Xavier's College, thus expressed his approval of Father Baden's plan and the appropriateness of the name which had been selected for the institution.

To our young men, full of life, buoyant with hope, thrilling with the prospect of great achievements, thirsting for enjoyment, able-bodied and clean-minded, I, as one of their many well-wishers and sincere friends, and in full accord and sympathy with their generous patrons, wish the continual charm of unalloyed cheerfulness combined with self-respect, loyalty to Christian duty, born of the spirit of self-sacrifice, enterprising industry and saving economy, mutual helpfulness and all-embracing charity, such as radiates from, and is inspired by, the heart of the kindly, noble, saintly Apostle, the first Bishop of Cincinnati, the faithful son of St. Dominic, Right Reverend Bishop Edward Fenwick, the benign and zealous Patron and Protector of the Fenwick Club.

Very Reverend F. J. Heiermann, S.J.,

March 19, 1916.<sup>17</sup>

### The Fenwick Club and The Boys' Home, a model

<sup>17</sup> *The Fenwick Club and The Boys' Home* (a prospectus). From the same pamphlet (unpaged) we learn that The Fenwick Club began (April, 1915) in a leased building, 319 Broadway; and that The Boys' Home was opened in 1884. But on the dedication of the structure of which we have spoken, both were removed to Pioneer Street. Although housed under the same roof, the two institutions remain separate and distinct.



institution and a power for good, is an achievement that would have delighted the fatherly heart of Ohio's apostle. Its dedication to him will perpetuate his memory, as it shows that his work has truly followed him. In Bishop Fenwick, true servant of God that he was, have been fulfilled the words of Holy Scripture in regard to the wise man: "Many shall praise his wisdom, and it shall never be forgotten. The memory of him shall not depart away, and his name shall be in request from generation to generation. Nations shall declare his wisdom, and the Church shall show forth his praise."

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(copy) ; and a rough sketch (in pencil) of Saint Joseph's Province of Dominicans by Rev. Stephen Byrne, O.P.

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